

Child Safe Policy Manual

Family Konnect Pty Ltd

Version 3.1, approved 15 October 2026. Next review due September 2027.

Approved by: Silvia Salazar, Director, Family Konnect Pty Ltd

Applies to: every person who does work for Family Konnect, including employees, independent contractors, students and volunteers.

Governing Agency: NSW Office of the Children's Guardian

Aligned with: the ten NSW Child Safe Standards, administered by the Office of the Children's Guardian.

This manual is published in full. It is the document our supervisors are held to, and it is the document families, agencies and courts can hold us to. If anything in it does not match your experience of Family Konnect, we want to hear about it.

A note on our internal records

Alongside this manual we keep an incident and disclosure register, a Working With Children Check and training register, a risk register, and a signed acknowledgement of this Code of Conduct from every person who works for us.

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Section 1: Introduction and governance

1.1 Director's statement of commitment to child safety

To our supervisors, to the families we work with, and to the agencies and courts who refer to us,

At Family Konnect we believe that every child has the right to feel safe, to be safe, and to be heard. Our work exists because a child's relationship with a parent is worth protecting, and because that relationship sometimes needs a safe place, a neutral adult, and an honest written record. The physical, emotional and cultural safety of the child in that room, that park or that car is not a box we tick on the way to delivering a service. It is the reason the service exists.

Our pledge

I want to be clear: **Family Konnect has zero tolerance for child abuse, neglect, or harm of any kind.** We apply the ten NSW Child Safe Standards set by the Office of the Children's Guardian across everything we do. To meet that commitment, we pledge to:

- **Put children first.** In every decision, the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child come before the preferences of the adults, before the convenience of the service, and before the commercial interests of this business.
- **Listen to children.** We will actively listen to children and young people. We will create an environment where they feel comfortable raising concerns and confident that they will be taken seriously.
- **Uphold equity.** We work to be culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, for children from culturally and linguistically diverse families, for children with disability, and for LGBTQIA+ young people.
- **Engage only suitable people.** Every supervisor holds a verified Working With Children Check and a National Police Check before they meet a family, and signs this Code of Conduct before their first session.
- **Act quickly.** We report suspected abuse, neglect or misconduct promptly and in line with NSW law. We do not wait for certainty before we act on a risk.
- **Say what we do, and do what we say.** This manual is public. If our practice ever drifts from it, it is the practice that is wrong, not the manual.

A shared responsibility

Child safety is not only my job as Director. It belongs to every person connected to this service. Most of our supervisors are independent contractors who work alone with a family, often in a public park or in someone's home, often on a weekend. That makes the culture we build together more important than any procedure that is written down, because on the day, it is one person's judgement that keeps a child safe.

So I ask everyone who works with us, and everyone who uses our services, to speak up. If you see something that does not feel right, tell me. Our door is open to feedback on how we can do better.

Sincerely,

Silvia Salazar

Director, Family Konnect Pty Ltd

8 September 2026

1.2 Child Safe Policy

Purpose and scope

This policy states how Family Konnect keeps children and young people safe, and what everyone who works for us is required to do. It applies to every person who performs work for Family Konnect, whether as an employee, an independent contractor, a student or a volunteer.

It applies in every setting we work in: community venues and public parks, the contact room spaces in Pyrmont Community Centre, a family's home, a vehicle during supervised transport, a foster carer's home during respite, and online contact sessions.

Statement of commitment

Family Konnect has zero tolerance for child abuse. We are committed to prioritising the best interests of the child in every decision, to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for every child we work with, and to empowering children to take part in decisions that affect them.

We accept that the families who come to us are often in the hardest weeks of their lives, and that a supervised visit is not a neutral event for anybody in the room. Our answer to that is not to be distant. It is to be clear about the boundaries, warm inside them, and honest in what we write down afterwards.

The ten Child Safe Standards, and what we do about each one

The Child Safe Standards are set under the *Children's Guardian Act 2019* (NSW). Below is each standard, followed by what it actually means in our practice.

- 1. Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.** The Director writes, approves and reviews this manual personally, and is the named contact for any concern raised about the service.
- 2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.** Supervisors check in with the child during a session, and what a child says about how contact is going is recorded in the report in their own words, not paraphrased into ours.
- 3. Families and communities are informed and involved.** Families receive our Service Agreement before contact begins, agree on the venue in advance, and receive the written report within 3 business days of the session. This manual is published on our website so that any parent, carer, caseworker or lawyer can read what we hold ourselves to.

4. **Equity is upheld and diversity is taken into account.** We ask at intake what a child needs in order to feel comfortable, including cultural, language, dietary, sensory and accessibility needs, and we choose the venue and the supervisor accordingly.
5. **People working with children are suitable and supported.** Working With Children Checks are verified through the Office of the Children's Guardian Employer Portal, not sighted. Every supervisor also holds a National Police Check, holds a relevant qualification, and has two referees asked directly about their suitability to work with children.
6. **Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused.** A child can raise a concern without an adult's help and without putting it in writing. We answer them in language they understand, and we tell them what happens next.
7. **Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.** Every supervisor completes induction before their first family.
8. **Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur.** Every venue is agreed before it is used, and every private home is risk assessed before the first visit there. Online sessions are hosted by the supervisor, who is present for the whole session, and no personal contact details pass between the parents through us.
9. **Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved.** This manual is reviewed every year, and again after any incident, complaint or near miss, whether or not the review is due.
10. **Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.** This manual is the documentation. It is published, it is given to every supervisor, and it is signed before their first session.

1.3 Where we sit in the law

Working With Children Checks

Supervised contact, supervised changeovers, supervised transport and in-home support are child-related work under the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* (NSW). Everyone who does that work for us must hold a current, cleared Working With Children Check, verified by us before they start. Section 3.2 sets out how we verify it. Where we engage a supervisor in another state, we verify the equivalent check in that state, such as a Victorian Working With Children Check or a Queensland Blue Card.

Mandatory reporting

Our supervisors deliver welfare and children's services to children in the course of paid work, which makes them mandatory reporters under section 27 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (NSW). We treat every person who works for Family Connect as a mandatory reporter.

Insurance

Family Konnect holds \$20 million public liability insurance and \$10 million professional indemnity insurance covering all services we provide.

Section 2: Culture and expectations

2.1 Child Safe Code of Conduct

Purpose: to set out the behaviour expected of everyone who works for Family Konnect, so that professional boundaries are clear and children are safe. Every person signs this Code before their first session with a family. Breaching it is grounds for immediate removal from child-related work.

What we always do

- **Put the child first.** Act in the best interests of the child, before the wishes of either parent and before the smooth running of the session.
- **Keep the relationship professional.** Physical contact is limited to what the service genuinely requires, happens in the open where it can be seen, and is led by the child. A child who does not want to be touched is not touched.
- **Be inclusive.** Respect every child regardless of culture, disability, gender, sexuality, religion, language or background, and pay particular attention to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- **Listen and act.** Take every disclosure, concern or complaint from a child seriously, act on it if necessary, and record it in the child's own words.
- **Report.** Report any concern about a child's safety.
- **Write it down honestly.** Reports record what was observed, not what anyone hoped happened. We do not soften a report for a paying parent, and we do not sharpen one either.

What we never do

- **Never use frightening or humiliating discipline.** No yelling at, humiliating, shaming, threatening or physically punishing a child, ever, for any reason.
- **Never make private contact.** No contacting a child or a family through personal social media, a personal phone number or a personal email address. All contact runs through Family Konnect.
- **Keep Secrets.** Never ask a child to keep a secret, and never promise to keep one if a child wants to tell you something.
- **Never build a private bond.** Gifts are not banned at Family Konnect. A small birthday or milestone gift, given openly, is part of how we show a child that they matter, and where there are siblings we do not single one child out. What is banned is anything **private** such as offering special treatment, or spending time alone with a child outside of designated professional duties.

- **Never keep images.** Photographs taken during a session belong to the report and to nothing else. They are never kept on a personal device once the report is submitted, never uploaded to a personal cloud or social media account, and never shown or sent to anyone outside the process in Section 4.2.
- **Never work outside the arrangement.** No babysitting, no lifts, no visits and no contact with a family outside what Family Konnect has arranged, even when a parent asks and even when it would help.

2.2 Our promise to you

This section is written for the children and young people who come to us.

Hi. We are really glad you are here. Your safety and your happiness are the most important things to us. Here is what you can expect from Family Konnect.

1. **You come first.** Everything we do is about making sure you are okay. We will listen to what you say, and we will take your feelings seriously.
2. **You are safe here.** We check that the places we meet are safe before you get there, and the grown-ups who look after you are trained to keep you protected.
3. **We treat everyone fairly.** It does not matter who you are, where you come from, what language you speak at home, what you believe, or whether you have a disability. You are respected and welcome here.
4. **You have a voice.** If something makes you feel sad, scared, or yucky, you can tell us. We promise to listen and to help. You can talk to your supervisor, to your parent or carer, or to anyone at Family Konnect.
5. **We pick the best people.** Every grown-up who works here has had a special safety check, called a Working With Children Check, so that we know they are safe to be around kids.
6. **Our workers have rules too.** They will never ask to meet you in secret, they will never message you on social media, and they will always respect your personal space. If a grown-up here ever breaks one of those rules, please tell someone.

Want to speak up?

You can tell your supervisor. You can tell your parents or carer. You can ask a grown-up to call us on **1800 842 048**, or you can email us at contact@familykonnect.com.au.

You can also call **Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800** at any time of the day or night. It is free, it is private, you do not have to give your name, and they are not part of Family Konnect.

You will never get in trouble for telling us something. We will tell you what we are going to do about it, in words that make sense to you.

Section 3: People and operations

3.1 Recruitment, training and induction

Phase 1: recruitment and screening

- **Job advertisements.** Every advertisement states our commitment to child safety and requires a current, cleared Working With Children Check, or the equivalent check in the applicant's state.
- **Qualifications and experience.** Supervisors hold a qualification in social work, psychology, community services, early childhood education, youth work, teaching or a related field, and/or have experience in child protection, family work, family law, domestic violence, mental health or alcohol and other drugs.
- **Interviewing.** Interviews include behavioural questions about child safety scenarios and professional boundaries.
- **Reference checks.** At least two professional referees are contacted and asked explicitly about the applicant's suitability to work with children.
- **Screening.** Every supervisor holds a National Police Check, and a current driver's licence, a registered vehicle and comprehensive insurance where they will be transporting children.
- **Verification before engagement.** Nobody commences child-related work until their Working With Children Check has been verified by management through the Office of the Children's Guardian Employer Portal. See Section 3.2.

Phase 2: induction

Before working with a family, every new supervisor must:

- Read and sign this Child Safe Policy Manual and Code of Conduct.
- Complete an orientation on the Reporting Policy in Section 5.3, including how to use the NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide.
- Be briefed on the risk management plan in Section 4.1 and on the specific setting they will be working in.
- Be briefed on the photographs, records and privacy rules in Section 4.2.
- Be talked through the court orders or family profile for their first family before they attend.

Phase 3: ongoing training and support

- **Annual refresher.** Every supervisor completes an annual refresher in child protection, mandatory reporting and de-escalation.
- **Supervision and debrief.** Supervisors have access to management to discuss complex cases, boundary questions and their own wellbeing, and a debrief is offered after any incident or distressing session.
- **Report feedback.** Contact reports are reviewed before they are issued, and feedback goes back to the supervisor, so that observation and recording quality keeps improving.

3.2 Working With Children Check verification

The rule

- **No verification, no start.** No individual is permitted to commence child-related work until their Working With Children Check has been verified by management through the Office of the Children's Guardian Employer Portal.
- **Sighting is not enough.** Sighting a physical card, a digital clearance, or an email from Service NSW is **not** acceptable proof of clearance. We verify, we do not sight.

The process

1. Collect the applicant's full legal name, date of birth and Working With Children Check number.
2. Management logs in to the Office of the Children's Guardian Employer Portal.
3. Verify the check. The portal must return a **Cleared** status. An application number that is still pending is not a clearance.
4. Record the verification date, the outcome, the expiry date and the name of the person who verified it in the Family Konnect register.

Ongoing monitoring

- Working With Children Check clearances in NSW are valid for five years.
- We review the register every two months and notify each supervisor 90 days before their clearance expires.
- If a **Barred** or **Interim Barred** notification is received from the Office of the Children's Guardian, that person is removed from all child-related duties immediately, before anything else is discussed.
- A supervisor whose clearance lapses is stood down from child-related work until a current clearance is verified again. There is no grace period.

Section 4: Risk management

4.1 Child safe risk management plan

Purpose: to identify, before it happens, what could put a child at risk in the settings we actually work in, and to state what we do about it.

Contact is facilitated in public parks and indoor play centres, in our booked room at Pyrmont Community Centre, in a family's own home, in a vehicle, and online. Each of those settings carries its own risks, and the honest plan is the one that names them.

SETTING OR RISK AREA	WHAT COULD GO WRONG	WHAT WE DO ABOUT IT
Community venues (parks, indoor play centres, public precincts)	A child moves out of the supervisor's sight in a busy public place. An unplanned encounter with the other parent or a family member.	The venue is agreed to by both parties before the session. The supervisor keeps the child in line of sight for the entire session and does not take on a second task. Arrivals and departures are staggered so the parties do not meet, unless face-to-face is agreed to by both parties. The session is ended if it cannot be run without risk.
Our contact room, Pyrmont Community Centre	Two parties meeting in a shared building. Other users of the centre entering the space.	The room is booked to Family Connect for the session. Arrival and departure times are staggered, and the supervisor escorts each party in and out.
A parent's or carer's home	An environment nobody has assessed. Other adults present who are not named in the orders. Rooms the supervisor cannot see into.	Every private residence is risk assessed before the first visit there, and is not used until that assessment is done. Only people named in the orders, or agreed on by both parties may be present. The assessment is repeated at least every twelve months, and again on any change of address or of who lives there. The supervisor ends the visit and removes the child if the home becomes unsafe.
Supervised transport	An unsuitable or badly fitted restraint. An unplanned stop or a change of route.	Licence, registration and comprehensive insurance are verified before a supervisor transports any child. An age-appropriate restraint is fitted and checked. The agreed route is followed with no unplanned stops.
Online contact	An unapproved adult joining a session. A party recording or screenshotting the child. Personal contact details passing between parents.	The supervisor hosts the session, admits each participant individually, stays present for the whole session, and closes it. Joining details are issued by Family Connect to each party separately. Recording by a party is not permitted. The session is ended if an unapproved person appears or a rule is broken.

SETTING OR RISK AREA	WHAT COULD GO WRONG	WHAT WE DO ABOUT IT
The people we engage	Someone unsuitable working with children. A professional boundary eroding gradually over a long placement.	Working With Children Check verified through the Employer Portal before the first session, plus a National Police Check and two referees asked directly about suitability. Signed Code of Conduct. Register review every two months. A barred notification removes the person from child-related work immediately.
Conflict between adults	A child witnessing an argument at a handover, or being drawn into one.	Staggered arrivals and departures so parents have no direct contact. A standing rule that the supervisor ends the session rather than let a child sit inside adult conflict, and records why.
Information and images	A report, a photograph or a family's details reaching someone who should not have them.	Handled under Section 4.2.

4.2 Photographs, records and privacy

Why we take photographs

A contact report for a court or an agency usually includes eight to ten photographs of the session. They are evidence of the interactions during the visit, who was there, and how the child presented, and for a parent who has not seen their child in months they are often the most valuable page in the report.

The rules on photographs

- **Consent and orders come first.** Photographs are taken where appropriate and with consent. Where a court order prohibits photographs of the child, none are taken. **Supervised changeovers are never photographed**, because a changeover is a handover at a doorway or a car park, not a visit.
- **They are for the report only.** A supervisor may take them on their own phone, what a supervisor may not do is keep them. Photographs are transferred to Family Connect with the report and deleted from the supervisor's device once the report has been submitted.
- **Never anywhere else.** Photographs of a child are never posted on social media. Family Connect does not publish identifiable images of the children or families we work with, anywhere, at any time.
- **Parents may photograph their own child** during a visit, unless court orders say otherwise. Nobody may photograph the supervisor, another family, or another family's child, under any circumstances.

The records we hold

We hold intake information, court orders and case plans, session reports and photographs, correspondence, and billing records. They are kept in Family Konnect's business systems, not in anybody's personal accounts, and access is limited to the people who need it to deliver or bill the service.

Sharing information

We handle personal information in line with Australian privacy law. We share it only with the people the court orders or the referral name, such as each parent, their solicitors, an Independent Children's Lawyer, or the referring caseworker.

Section 5: Responding and reporting

5.1 Complaints

Our principles

- **Children are believed.** A complaint from a child is taken as seriously as a complaint from an adult, and is not discounted because of the child's age or because of what a parent says about it.
- **No repercussions.** Nobody is disadvantaged for making a complaint in good faith. That applies to parents, to children, to caseworkers and to our own supervisors.
- **Support is welcome.** A child or an adult may bring a support person to any part of the process.
- **We answer children directly.** Where the complaint came from a child, the outcome is explained to that child in language they understand.

How to make a complaint

A complaint about the service, such as scheduling, fees or the conduct of a session, is made in writing to management at contact@familykonnect.com.au, and we will offer an appointment to talk it through.

A concern about a child's safety does not have to be in writing, and does not have to come from an adult.

We accept it however it reaches us: by phone on 1800 842 048, in person, by email, or through a supervisor.

What happens next

1. **Receive and acknowledge.** We listen and acknowledge receipt within 48 hours.
2. **Assess for immediate danger.** We assess whether the matter involves a risk of significant harm or reportable conduct. If it does, Section 5.3 is activated immediately and takes priority over everything else in this procedure.
3. **Review and investigate.** For service complaints, management investigates and speaks to the people involved.

4. **Resolve and communicate.** We aim to resolve standard complaints within 14 business days, and we tell you the outcome directly, in age-appropriate language where the complainant is a child.
5. **Record and improve.** Every complaint is logged so we can see patterns and fix the cause, not only the incident in front of us.

5.2 Responding to a child's disclosure

If a child tells you that something has happened to them, the first few minutes matter more than anything you will do afterwards. These five steps are for the person in the room.

1. **Listen quietly and calmly.** Give the child your full attention. Do not express shock, panic or anger, even about the person they are describing. Let them tell you in their own words, at their own pace.
2. **Reassure and validate.** Tell them they did the right thing. Say: *"Thank you for telling me. I believe you. This is not your fault."*
3. **Do not promise to keep a secret.** Be honest and gentle. Say: *"I am really glad you told me. I cannot keep this a secret, because my job is to keep you safe, so I need to tell someone whose job it is to help protect kids."*
4. **Keep questions to an absolute minimum.** Do not investigate. Never ask a leading question, such as "did your dad hit you?", and never ask "why" questions, such as "why were you in that room?". Ask open questions only where you need them to keep the child safe right now.
5. **Document and report immediately.** As soon as the child is safe, write down exactly what was said using the child's own words, and the date, time and setting. Complete the Incident and Disclosure Report and notify management the same day. Do not wait until the report is due.

5.3 Reporting policy

Step 1: immediate danger

If a child is in immediate, life-threatening danger, call **000** first. Everything else in this policy comes after that call.

Step 2: risk of significant harm

If you suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, whether from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or from neglect:

1. Complete the **NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide** online.
2. Where the Guide directs you to report, contact the **Child Protection Helpline on 13 21 11**, or use the eReporting portal.
3. Notify Family Konnect management immediately, and record what you reported and when.

4. If a child is at immediate risk of harm or has already been harmed, call 000, then call Family Konnect Management.

Step 3: an allegation against one of our own people

1. The person is removed from all child-facing duties immediately, before anything is investigated.
2. Family Konnect notifies the Office of the Children's Guardian within **seven business days**, applying the Reportable Conduct Scheme to ourselves voluntarily.
3. Where the family was referred by an agency, we notify the head of that agency immediately, so they can meet their own obligations.
4. Where the conduct may be criminal, it is reported to the NSW Police, and we do not investigate ahead of them.
5. The family is told what has happened and what we are doing about it, within 24 hours.

Step 4: telling the people affected

We notify the parties and, where relevant, the referring agency of any critical incident, reportable conduct matter, injury, disclosure or significant concern **within 24 hours**.

Step 5: records

Every concern, report and outcome is recorded in our internal Child Safety Register so that patterns can be seen over time, including patterns that look like nothing on their own.

5.4 If the concern is about the Director

Family Konnect is a small business and the Director is also the person most complaints would ordinarily be made to. That cannot be the only route, so it is not.

If your concern is about the Director, you do not have to raise it with her first, and you do not have to raise it with her at all. You can go directly to:

- the **NSW Child Protection Helpline on 13 21 11**, or the **NSW Police**, or **000** if a child is in immediate danger;
- the **Office of the Children's Guardian**, at reportableconduct@ocg.nsw.gov.au or ocg.nsw.gov.au;
- the **caseworker or agency** who referred the family, where there is one;
- the **court**, or the Independent Children's Lawyer, where proceedings are on foot.

Nobody at Family Konnect will ask you to come to us first, and nobody will be disadvantaged for going straight to an outside body.

5.5 Who to contact

IF THIS IS HAPPENING	CONTACT	NUMBER
A child is in immediate danger	Emergency services	000
You are worried a child is at risk of harm	NSW Child Protection Helpline	13 21 11
You are a child or young person who wants to talk to someone outside Family Konnect	Kids Helpline, free and confidential, 24 hours	1800 55 1800
You want to raise a concern or a complaint with us	Family Konnect	1800 842 048 contact@familykonnect.com.au
You want to report conduct by someone who works for us, to the regulator	NSW Office of the Children's Guardian	reportableconduct@ocg.nsw.gov.au
You need advice about a Working With Children Check	NSW Office of the Children's Guardian	ocg.nsw.gov.au