



Keeping Kids Safe: Children's Health Queensland's Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy



Queensland
Government

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Keeping Kids Safe: Children's Health Queensland's Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy 2020-2021

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Introduction: CHQ's Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy

The early years of a child's life are the foundation for future health, development and wellbeing. As an organisation entrusted with delivering life changing care for children, Children's Health Queensland (CHQ) values the responsibility to keep them safe, well and thriving. [CHQ's Children's Health and Wellbeing Services Plan 2018-2028](#) provides the ten-year vision for the future of clinical services for children and young people. The plan identifies the key health service directions and strategies needed to efficiently and effectively align clinical services with the needs of the community over the next ten years and beyond.

Many challenges faced by adults, such as mental health issues, obesity, heart disease, criminality, and poor literacy and numeracy, can be traced back to pathways that originated in early childhood. Adverse childhood experiences contribute to significant and persistent disadvantage and poor health and education outcomes affecting parental and community capacity ¹.

Ensuring children flourish as part of a healthy, vibrant society is CHQ's ethical, social and economic responsibility. CHQ is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of children and young people, particularly those from vulnerable and disadvantaged communities and families. The vision of a healthier tomorrow requires strategies that address health determinants, as well as health service delivery that is oriented around the needs of children, young people and families and is designed and delivered in partnership with them. Keeping kids safe while they are in the care of CHQ, directly or indirectly, is everyone's responsibility.

Legislative requirements

This Strategy, along with the associated policies, procedures and guidelines complies with the [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#) which outlines the screening requirements for child-related employment in Queensland and the need to have a risk management strategy for "regulated businesses", as defined by the legislation.

CHQ's Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy sets out our:

1. **Commitment** to creating a safe and supportive environment for all children and young people who access services – directly and indirectly
2. **Code of Conduct for Interacting with Children**
3. Procedures for **recruiting, selecting, training and managing staff**
4. Procedures for **handling disclosures or suspicions of harm**
5. Plan for **managing breaches** of this Risk Management Strategy
6. Policies for compliance with the **requirements of the blue card system**
7. Risk management plans for **high risk activities and special events**
8. Strategies for **communication and support**.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/preventingACES-508.pdf>

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

This Strategy aligns with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, developed in response to recommendations identified by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2018 (the “Royal Commission”). The purpose of the National Principles is to provide a nationally consistent approach to embedding a child safe culture across all sectors of Australian society in which children are involved.

A child safe organisation puts the best interests of children and young people first. A child safe organisation is one that creates a culture, adopts strategies and takes action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people.

The National Principles for a child safe organisation are:

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
6. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

CHQ aspires to be a leader in best practice as a child safe organisation and will continue to identify opportunities to further embed the National Principles in partnership with staff, patients and their families.



The below table maps the legislative requirements for a Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy, with relevant sections of this Strategy, and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

Legislative requirements for a Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy	Relevant section of CHQ's Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy	Alignment to the National Principles for a Child Safe Organisation
1. CHQ's statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm	Our Statement of Commitment Our commitment to keeping kids safe	Principle 1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture. Principle 2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously. Principle 4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice. Principle 8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed. Principle 10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.
2. CHQ's Code of Conduct for Interacting with Children	CHQ's Code of Conduct for Interacting with children	Principle 10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.
3. CHQ's procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing staff and volunteers	Recruitment and Selection Employment screening Training and supervision	Principle 5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice. Principle 7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
4. CHQ's policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines	Reporting Concerns Handling disclosures and suspicions of harm	Principle 10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.
5. CHQ's plan for managing breaches of this Risk Management Strategy	Managing breaches of the risk management strategy	Principle 10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.
6. Risk management plans for high risk activities and special events	Managing concerns – Risk Management	Principle 8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
7. Policies and procedures for managing compliance with the blue card system	Compliance with the requirements of the blue card system	Principle 5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice. Principle 10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

8. Strategies for communication and support	Raising awareness Support	Principle 1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture. Principle 2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously. Principle 3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing. Principle 6. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.
9. Continuous improvement A child and youth risk management strategy must be reviewed at least on an annual basis and after any incidents to ensure that risks continue to be addressed and minimised throughout the organisation.	Annual Review of the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy	Principle 9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.

Our Commitment to keeping kids safe

All children have the right to be safe from harm, everywhere, anytime.

The safety and wellbeing of children is CHQ's highest priority. Aligning with our commitment to delivering the best care **we are committed to creating a child safe environment for all children and young people who interact with our services.**

The ecosystem of care surrounding a child or young person and their family/caregiver is complex. CHQ values the role entrusted to us as leaders in paediatric health services within a networked system of services. We know that this confidence and trust extends beyond the services being provided when children are in our care, to influencing and advocating for child safe behaviours that keep our children safe in their communities.

Through CHQ's commitment to keeping kids safe, we provide a connected, holistic approach to creating a child safe organisation. This is reflected in our organisational policies and practices providing the framework for a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to keeping children safe.

Our organisational values of Respect, Integrity, Care and Imagination guide our commitment to person centred care and places the safety and wellbeing of children at the heart of all that we do. All staff, volunteers, students and service providers understand their

responsibility and the role they play to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

The empowerment and participation of children and young people is essential in creating a child safe culture. It is second only to leaders of organisations making sure safety is the number one priority and accordingly attended to. We are committed to building the confidence of children; and empowering them to have a voice and participate in decisions and processes that affect them.



We value difference and recognise the diverse needs of our children and their families and commit to high quality health care which supports diverse physical, cultural, emotional, spiritual and individual needs. We recognise that a child and young person's wellbeing is impacted by more than just their physical health and take a holistic person-centred approach to keeping kids safe. In order for children and young people to feel safe, we recognise the need to be culturally competent, to provide services in a culturally safe way, and to listen and respond to the voice of children and young people. We recognise the importance of getting to know what is important to a child or young person; by building trust and understanding them, their family and culture, they are more likely to speak up about what makes them feel safe or unsafe.

Our principles for keeping kids safe

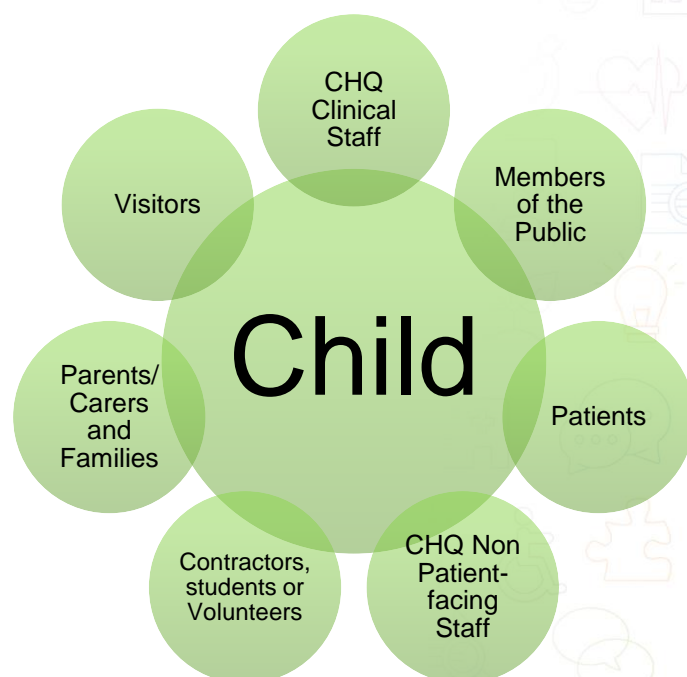
CHQ is committed to the following principles to keep kids safe:

1. All children and young people have the right to be safe from harm, everywhere, anytime.
2. Safety and wellbeing of children and young people is our highest priority. We create a safe environment for children and young people who use or come into contact with our services.
3. We create a safe environment for children and young people who use or come into contact with our services.
4. Children and young people are empowered to have a voice and participate in decisions and processes that affect them.
5. We take a connected approach to create a holistic child safe organisation.
6. Our organisational policies and practices provide the framework for a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to keeping children and young people safe.
7. Our values of Respect, Integrity, Care and Imagination guide our commitment to person centred care and places the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at the heart of all that we do.
8. Our leaders promote and act as role models in applying child safe organisation principles, practices and culture.
9. We value difference and recognise the diverse needs of our children, young people and their families and commit to high quality health care which prioritises diverse physical, cultural, emotional, spiritual and individual needs.
10. All staff, volunteers, students and service providers understand the role they play to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.
11. We are committed to CHQ's *Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy* and [CHQ's Code of Conduct for interacting with children](#) and will deal with any breaches in a timely manner.

Contact with children and young people

A child is defined as an individual under 18 years of age by the [*Child Protection Act 1999 \(Qld\)*](#).

As a leading paediatric quaternary health service, children in CHQ's care will come in direct and indirect contact with a range of people. CHQ's clinical and frontline staff and volunteers provide services directly to children, young people and their families. Contractors, third party providers, visitors and students may also come into contact with children and young people when undertaking their duties. Corporate and non-patient facing staff may indirectly engage with children and young people due to the layout and size of the facilities. Children and young people who are in CHQ's care can also be in direct contact with other children and their families/visitors in our care. Parents, relatives, visitors and the general public may also come into contact with other children and young people when visiting patients as well as attending public events onsite.



Who does this strategy apply to?

This Strategy applies to:

- all CHQ Board members, executives, staff, volunteers, students, contractors, consultants, other service providers, researchers and known event attendees;
- anyone who may engage with children currently receiving care, or in contact with CHQ services or events.

This Strategy has direct impact for children and young people and their parents/carers and families.

The varying levels of contact with children across the organisation will affect how this strategy is implemented:

- It is expected that all people managers will be familiar with this Strategy and know how it applies to our organisation.
- Staff, volunteers, students, contractors and people associated with CHQ in roles with direct contact with children must understand this Strategy and how it applies in their day-to-day duties.
- All those remaining who may have contact with children, in roles with very limited or no contact with children, should be aware of the Strategy, even if it does not relate directly to their role.

Implementation of the Strategy will be complemented by appropriate processes, guidelines and communication mechanisms tailored to the needs of the target audience.

Relevant legislation

In upholding this Strategy, the following legislation must be considered:

- [*Child Protection Act 1999 \(QLD\)*](#)
- [*Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(QLD\)*](#)
- [*Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Regulation 2020 \(QLD\)*](#)
- [*Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2020 \(QLD\)*](#)
- [*Human Rights Act 2019 \(QLD\)*](#)
- [*Criminal Code Act 1899*](#)

CHQ's Code of Conduct for Interacting with Children

CHQ is a values-based organisation and the values of Respect, Integrity, Care and Imagination guide decision making and service provision. These values are the foundation of [CHQ's Code of Conduct for Interacting with Children](#). The Code outlines standards of expected behaviour for all adults associated with Children's Health Queensland in their interactions with children. All staff, volunteers, students and service providers must comply with the Code. The Code is to be read in conjunction with the [Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service](#).

Our People

CHQ commits to the CHQ Code of Conduct for Interacting with Children.

This will be demonstrated by:

- Staff, volunteers, students and service providers knowing the high standards expected for all interactions with children and the consequences of any breaches of the Strategy, Code of Conduct for Interacting with Children, legislation or related policy, procedure or practice
- Staff, volunteers, students, other service providers and visitors being aware of and committed to upholding CHQ's values when interacting with children
- Clearly and consistently raising awareness of who staff can approach to discuss any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of all children
- Robust recruitment and screening processes to ensure that CHQ staff share our values and are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children
- Providing staff, volunteers and students with regular training, supervision and ongoing development of practices which contribute to keeping kids safe
- Staff, volunteers, students and other service providers meeting record keeping and information sharing responsibilities.

Individual and collective responsibility

All teams and individuals to whom this Strategy applies shall adopt an individual and collective responsibility approach to the safety of children.

Individuals must take responsibility for their own behaviour as well as supporting others to feel comfortable and safe raising concerns about behaviour they observe or become aware of.

Staff, volunteers, students and other service providers are expected to act and make decisions in the interests of protecting a child where the safety of children is at risk.

CHQ's Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy establishes CHQ-wide responsibilities and systems to keep children safe, but it does not remove the need and obligation for individuals to act to address risks or concerns should they arise.

Recruitment and selection

Recruitment processes reflect CHQ's commitment to child safety in job advertisements and in all role descriptions. This commitment demonstrates to all prospective staff that the safety and wellbeing of children is CHQ's highest priority.

CHQ commits to incorporate a commitment to child safety in job advertisements and to incorporate the following wording in all position descriptions:

Children's Health Queensland is committed to keeping all kids safe through:

- *providing welcoming, safe and caring environments for children and young people*
- *implementing measures to prevent suspected child abuse and neglect for all children we engage with*

- *immediately addressing any concerns of safety extending to suspected child abuse and neglect across all services and CHQ endorsed activities (including CHQ-endorsed public events/forums and collaboratively planned activities such as CHQ/Children's Hospital Foundation events).*

Where recruitment is for a child-related role, selection and screening processes will include mandatory work history, criminal history, blue card checks, reference checks and exploring a person's values, motivation and suitability for working with children. Exploring a prospective staff member's work history and motivation for working with children helps to understand their values, professional boundaries and approach to the safety of children and ensure their values are consistent with CHQ's values.

Recruitment panel members are provided with recruitment and selection training, together with guidance on recruiting based on motivational and team fit as well as technical competency.

The CHQ Recruitment Team are responsible for establishing the appropriate procedures and tools, including processes, training and other ongoing support to ensure that staff responsible for recruitment and selection are appropriately skilled.

If any concerns arise during the recruitment and screening process about a prospective staff member's suitability to work with children, these should be discussed with relevant line managers and the People and Culture team. If there is any doubt about an individual's suitability to work with children, they must not be engaged.

CHQ's recruitment and selection process is governed by the [Department of Health's Recruitment and Selection Policy \(B1\)](#) and associated procedures and guidelines.

Employment Screening

Working with Children Checks (Blue Cards) are required for all CHQ staff who do not have registration through the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and who meet the requirements for regulated employment under the [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000](#) by providing "a health service to a child at a health facility".

Blue Cards are not required for CHQ staff who do not meet the criteria of the [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000](#). All staff undertake a criminal history check prior to commencement of employment with CHQ. Any adverse checks are reviewed by an established Criminal History Assessment Panel.

All CHQ staff are required, under the [Queensland Public Service Code of Conduct](#), Queensland Health policies and their professional registration (where relevant), to advise CHQ as their employer if they are charged with an offence or if there is any change to their criminal history or relevant circumstances.

Robust reference checking is also required for all new appointments.

All volunteers, students and contractors are required to hold a valid Blue Card.

Information specific to Blue Card holders is provided at commencement of employment and incorporated in relevant role descriptions and offer letters.

CHQ's detailed procedures for pre-employment checks are contained with the following policies, procedures and guides:

- [Employment Screening Policy \(B40\)](#)
- [Employees to Notify Supervisor if Charged with or Convicted of an Indictable Offence policy \(E4\)](#)

While an important tool, Working with Children Checks – in the absence of broader child-safe strategies – do not make organisations safer for children. In fact, an over-reliance on Working with Children Checks can be detrimental to children's safety. They can provide a false sense of comfort to parents and communities, and may cause organisations to become complacent due to the belief that people who have undergone Working with Children Checks do not pose any risk to children – this is not the case.

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Working with Children Checks Report, 2015.

The [*Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000*](#) introduced a 'No Card, No Start' policy which requires all people working with children to have a blue card **before** they start child-related work.

Additional information and guidance is available via CHQ's [Blue Card Information intranet page](#).

Training and supervision

Through training, staff, students and volunteers are reminded regularly about the obligation to take an individual and collective responsibility approach to the safety of children in contact with CHQ. Training needs increase and become more targeted as individuals in child-related roles work in areas that expose a higher degree of risk (e.g. home visits).

As services change, individuals are promoted or roles evolve, training and supervision must be adapted to provide for increased levels of responsibility and contact with children, the need for deeper understanding of policy, procedure and practice, and the need to lead by example in upholding CHQ's values and demonstrating child safe practices.

All CHQ staff, volunteers, students and contractors attend a compulsory general orientation program, incorporating information on speaking up, child protection and reporting.

All staff, volunteers, students and service providers will be provided with training in child protection and the obligations of working in a Child Safe Organisation. A tiered Statewide framework for child protection capability development (incorporating the principles of this Strategy) has been developed by the Statewide Child Protection Clinical Partnership and CHQ's Child Protection and Forensic Medical Service (CPFMS), in partnership with the Department of Health's Social Policy and Legislation Branch. The Child Protection Capability Framework (capability framework) outlines five levels of capability for Queensland Health staff across the continuum of care. Its primary aim is to ensure that all Queensland Health staff, clinical and non-clinical, have a common understanding of their responsibilities to enable them to recognise risk factors for abuse and neglect and respond appropriately, within the scope of their role, to any suspicions of a child in need of protection.

The new Statewide Child Protection Capability Framework will detail the relevant capabilities at each level including;

- Local Child Protection Services/Units that provide support to staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors who may identify children in need of protection and further require tertiary level responses;
- Indicators of abuse and neglect including grooming behaviours and understanding the complexity of abuse in line with the Statewide Child Protection Capability Framework; and
- Supporting staff to adhere to legal responsibilities as mandatory and non-mandatory reporters to formally report reasonable suspicions of child abuse and neglect under the [Child Protection Act 1999 \(Qld\)](#).

The Department of Health's Social Policy and Legislation Branch will launch the Capability Framework in late 2021.

CHQ's CPFMS staff deliver further specialist training to specific services and teams to support contemporary workforce development and ensuring CHQ-wide compliance with reporting obligations.

CHQ, in partnership with the Statewide Child Protection Clinical Partnership, assumes the lead role for coordinating the Statewide Child Protection Annual workshop for Child Protection Liaison Officers and Child Protection Advisors as an event to build statewide capability in child protection.

Training and education opportunities to build awareness of the obligations relating to working in a Child Safe Organisation (including this Strategy and the Code of Conduct for Interacting with Children) will be developed and implemented. These obligations will be incorporated into existing training programs wherever possible (including orientation and recruitment and selection training).

Registers of training are maintained through CHQ's Learning Management System, TeachQ+.

Line managers are responsible for ensuring appropriate operational supervision is provided. Supervision provides managers with the opportunity to monitor child safe practice, attitudes and behaviour of staff/volunteers/students over time, as well as providing staff with the opportunity to develop skills and understanding, reflect on child safe practice and raise any issues or concerns.

CHQ has established a formal process for regular performance discussions with individual staff. Performance Coaching and Development (PC&D) is a process used to support the successful performance and development of all employees at CHQ. It involves regular coaching-based conversations that focus on 'what' people are achieving and 'how' they deliver these outcomes. Line managers are provided with training and guidance on the PC&D process.

All people management policies and procedures are available on CHQ's Governance eCatalogue, on the CHQ Intranet.

Managing Concerns

Reporting Concerns

The Child Protection and Forensic Medical Service (CPFMS) provides a single point of contact for child protection across CHQ. Based at the Queensland Children's Hospital (QCH), the CPFMS service is comprised of a multidisciplinary team including medical, nursing and allied health staff. CPFMS also manages child protection liaison staff providing child protection liaison at, Queen Elizabeth II and Redlands Hospitals and respective Community Health Centres.

CPFMS provides a tertiary referral hospital service for the consultation and management of suspected child abuse and neglect, as part of a state-wide clinical leadership role in education, training and research. This is facilitated through individual case consultation and state-wide education achieved through regular professional development activities, including telehealth, case reviews and professional development activities organised by CPFMS. CPFMS services include:

- Management of all acute admissions and presentations for complex child protection cases
- Forensic services including clinical assessment, case management and medico-legal reports
- Provision of expert clinical consultation and support to staff at QCH pertaining to medical and psychosocial care associated with child protection
- Undertaking a state-wide leadership role through service evaluations, practice reviews and academic publication
- Core health representation for Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) team meetings
- Supporting workforce development through teaching across disciplines through student supervision, registrar and fellow rotations and multidisciplinary team care.

Handling disclosures and suspicions of harm

CHQ is committed to promoting the protection, safety, health and wellbeing of children and young people who are at risk of harm or have experienced harm from child abuse and neglect.

Harm is defined as "Any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing". Harm can be caused by physical, psychological, or emotional abuse or neglect; or sexual abuse or exploitation (s.9 of the [Child Protection Act 1999](#)).

A **disclosure of harm** occurs when someone, including a child, discloses harm that has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen to a child.

A **suspicion of harm** is when someone has a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering, or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm.

Individuals have a duty of care to follow up any suspicions of harm or potential risk of harm to children and young people in their care.

There are well established procedures in place to support and guide staff who may become concerned and suspect a child is in need of protection. It is important to act quickly and in the best interests of the child or young person after a disclosure of harm is received, irrespective of the alleged source of harm.

Relevant procedures are available on the CHQ intranet and are updated regularly:

- 1) [CHQ-PROC-02627 Report of suspected child in need of protection to Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women](#)
- 2) [CHQ-GDL-02611 Reporting of a reasonable suspicion of child sexual abuse or assault](#)
- 3) [CHQ-PROC-62108 Security provisions for children in hospital where child protection concerns exist](#)
- 4) [CHQ-GDL-02610 Clinical Management of Possible Non-Accidental Injuries](#)
- 5) [CHQ-PROC-02612 Our Child – When a Child/Young person in Care is Reported Missing](#)
- 6) [CHQ-PROC-00128 Failure to attend – Child protection concerns](#)
- 7) [CHQ-PROC-02603 Care of patients who have experienced alleged sexual abuse / assault](#)

These procedures assist to:

1. Identify significant harm or risk of significant harm to children and young people.
2. Provide consistency and best practice guidance in responding to a reportable/reasonable suspicion of harm to a child.
3. Ensure staff are aware of their legal responsibilities in relation to child protection.
4. Ensure all staff are aware of the legal responsibility to formally report reasonable suspicions of child abuse and neglect (general reporting provisions) under the [Child Protection Act 1999 \(Qld\)](#).
5. Ensure that appropriate measures are undertaken to assist with reducing the risk of further / future harm to the child or young person.

The specialist service provided by the multi-disciplinary CPFMS team provides guidance and support around referral and reporting pathways to CHQ and other Hospital and Health Services, as well as providing a single point of contact for interagency engagement with partner agencies such as Queensland Police Service and Department of Children, Youth Justice, and Multicultural Affairs who assume investigative functions and work in partnership with CPFMS. In addition, CHQ's After Hours Social Work Service has a strong focus on referral and responding to concerns of harm by taking an early intervention approach, where appropriate.

Doctors and registered nurses have mandatory reporting obligations under the [Child Protection Act 1999 \(Qld\)](#). These individuals **must** report in accordance with [Guideline CHQ-GDL-02611](#).

Child protection is everybody's responsibility and every person **should** report to the Department of Children, Youth Justice, and Multicultural Affairs if that person forms a reasonable suspicion that a child (including an unborn child) has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm **and** does not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.

There may be circumstances where there is concern for a child's welfare, but it does not reach the threshold to be considered a disclosure or suspicion of harm. CHQ staff members who may be concerned about a child or young person for any reason are encouraged to:

- In the first instance, discuss any concerns with their line manager
- Seek advice from CPFMS during office hours (Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5pm), or contact the After-Hours Social Work Service
- If the concern relates to behaviour of a member of CHQ staff, it may also be appropriate to obtain advice from the Human Resources Team (People and Governance).

Volunteers, contractors, students and other service providers are advised to follow their own internal processes in the first instance. Advice may also be sought from CHQ's CPFMS or the After-Hours Social Work Service as outlined above.

Risk Management

The ecosystem of care surrounding a child or young person and their family/caregiver is increasingly complex and dynamic. Risk is intrinsic to the provision of healthcare services and exists in all facets of service delivery. CHQ manages this uncertainty through the application of a consistent and organisational-wide approach to risk management.

[CHQ's Enterprise Risk Management Framework](#) provides guidance to all staff on utilising a consistent risk management approach to optimise decision making. Underpinned by ISO 31000:2018, CHQ applies a systematic and iterative process to identify, assess, evaluate, manage and monitor risks. The Enterprise Risk Management Framework defines risk management accountabilities and responsibilities and risk management processes.

As the state-wide steward for the health of children and young people across Queensland, partnerships with other Hospital and Health Services and other service providers are critical to address health system change that is inclusive of child and family, services and community, and structural and social factors. These contextual factors are considered as part of risk-based decision making and the continual improvement of established controls (systems, processes and procedures).

General risk factors that may apply across CHQ's services include:

- as a public health organisation, CHQ's approach to welcoming families and visitors to multiple facilities;
- opportunities for unsupervised access to children and young people;
- opportunities to develop a relationship of trust with a child or young person (or other persons close to the child or young person) over time;
- assisting children and young people with personal care (bathing, toileting etc);
- where the child or young person has particular vulnerabilities (for example, disabilities, conditions that are life limiting, children who have limited family networks or those who may be in the care system and children with limited informal support networks);
- where there is interaction between children and other children.

CHQ-wide risk mitigation strategies have been implemented where appropriate, including professional boundaries, rules associated with supervision and restrictions to internet access. Additionally, specific policies, procedures and guidelines have been established for volunteers, students and contractors.

Based on a consideration of the nature of services provided and activities undertaken by CHQ, separate risk management processes for managing high risk activities and special events are not required.

Risk management training is available to staff in fulfilling their risk management responsibilities.

CHQ's Enterprise Risk Management Framework is available on the [CHQ intranet](#). Questions about this Framework should be directed to CHQ_Risk@health.qld.gov.au.

Managing breaches of the risk management strategy

CHQ defines a breach as "a result of an act or failing to do an act, and includes a failure to comply (non-compliance) with a legislative or other compliance obligation". Breaches of the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy must be managed in accordance with CHQ's Compliance Breach Management and Reporting Procedure ([CHQ PROC-26405](#)). This procedure outlines the approach to addressing compliance breaches in a consistent and risk-based manner. All breaches, actual and potential, must be managed in accordance with this procedure.

A breach of the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy may include:

- Failure to meet expectations defined in the CHQ Code of Conduct for Interacting with Children
- Failure to report suspicion of harm and/or concern for a child's welfare in accordance with legislated reporting requirements

- Failure to undertake required recruitment and selection due diligence that results in the appointment of new staff member who does not hold a valid blue card
- Failure of staff to advise CHQ of any change to their criminal history status which disqualifies the staff member from holding a blue card
- Failure to maintain training competency rates in speaking up, child protection and reporting, and refresher training on the Code of Conduct for Interactions with Children (once established).

If an actual or potential breach of the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy is identified, the following steps must be taken:

- Take immediate action to reduce, minimise or contain the actual breach and follow the requirements of CHQ's related procedures, namely:
 - Reporting of a reasonable suspicion of child sexual abuse or assault to the CPFMS (refer to section "Handling Disclosures and Suspicions of Harm");
 - Report of suspected child in need of protection to Department of Children, Youth Justice, and Multicultural Affairs;
- Inform line manager of the breach immediately, or as soon as possible;
- If the breach involves a CHQ staff member, inform the Human Resources Team as soon as possible. The Human Resources Team will provide advice on relevant Human Resource procedures, the Code of Conduct and will liaise with CPFMS as appropriate.

A flowchart for managing breaches of the CHQ Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy is provided in [Appendix 3](#).

All breaches will be investigated, and appropriate corrective actions implemented. Corrective actions will be proportionate to the breach and will include disciplinary and other action, which may include termination of employment. Records of reported breaches will be maintained by the Human Resources Team. Registered Nurses and Medical Officers are mandated reporters under the [Child Protection Act 1999](#). Sanctions may apply under this Act to those who fail to report suspected abuse. Volunteers, contractors, students and employees of other service providers must also report any breaches to their line manager using their established processes.

Compliance with the requirements of the blue card system

CHQ's detailed procedures for pre-employment checks are contained with the following policies, procedures and guides:

- [Employment Screening Policy \(B40\)](#)
- [Employees to Notify Supervisor if Charged with or Convicted of an Indictable Offence policy \(E4\)](#)

Additional information and guidance is available via CHQ's [Blue Card Information intranet page](#).

These Policies provide information on roles requiring Blue Cards, the process for obtaining Blue Cards, guidance for line managers and procedures for dealing with changes and negative notices.

Raising awareness

Children's Health Queensland commits to:

- Celebrate children and young people and enable their voices to be heard.
- Work with staff to embed a culture at CHQ where "speaking up" is enabled, recognised and rewarded.
- Ensure widespread awareness of CHQ's commitment to keeping kids safe, and this Strategy. All staff, volunteers, students and service providers will be made aware of the requirements and principles of the Strategy and associated policies, procedures and guidelines.
- Empower children, young people and their families to know their rights and what to expect and what to do if a child does not feel safe or observations that a child may be unsafe in their interactions with CHQ.
- Develop child friendly resources and information about CHQ's approach to keeping kids safe.

- Display information about CHQ's commitment in areas visible to children, young people and their families in contact with CHQ's services.
- Ensure staff, volunteers, students and service providers have access to resources to support Child Safe practice and decision making in accordance with this Strategy and to display information about our philosophy for keeping kids safe in areas where staff, volunteers and service providers will see it.
- Work with diverse groups across CHQ to ensure our communication and initiatives are culturally appropriate and inclusive.

CHQ's commitment to keeping kids safe is published on the CHQ Intranet, public facing Internet and in patient access areas and services providing care.

To support awareness and engagement, a CHQ-wide communication strategy, developed in partnership with staff, volunteers, children and their families using child friendly language is being developed and implemented.

The Strategy and associated policies, procedures and guidelines are published on the CHQ Intranet, and are communicated through all-staff messages, notices, training and onboarding processes. Information about the Strategy will be provided to volunteers through their orientation and communication networks.

CHQ's Executive Leadership Team provides governance for the Strategy (oversight of implementation, monitoring and evaluation).

Hearing the Voice of the Child

CHQ's commitment to person centred care is reinforced through achieving Gold Planetree accreditation in 2021.

To hear the voice of the child, CHQ has established a Youth Advisory Forum to receive direct feedback from children and young people about their experiences at CHQ. A Consumer Voice Working Group (the "Voice of the Child" working group) has also been established to develop actions addressing consumer voice priorities. Both the Forum and working group provide expertise and insight into initiatives to keep kids safe at CHQ, within the *Voice of Children and Young People Framework* (refer diagram below).

Voice of children and young people framework



In addition, a number of forums have been established to enable children and young people to have a voice on issues relating to specific service areas. Beautiful Minds is Child and Youth Mental Health Services Youth Advisory Group. They meet on a monthly basis to provide feedback and advice to CYMHS on a range of issues.

Exceptional child-centred care is celebrated through CHQ's annual Children's Choice Award. Children and young people are invited to nominate a CHQ team or individual who has consistently provided exceptional child-centred care. This award allows children and young people to have a voice about the child-centred behaviours that have made a difference to their care. The young people are then invited to present this award to the winning individuals/teams at CHQ's annual staff Excellence Awards ceremony.

The rights and responsibilities of children, young people and families, as consumers of CHQ, are outlined within the [Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights](#). The CHQ Family Centred Care Committee, in consultation with clinicians and consumers, has developed two resources to assist families in knowing their rights and responsibilities when accessing CHQ services and to encourage families to be confident in asking questions at any time about their child's care; [Know your rights and responsibilities](#) and [Do you have questions about your child's care?](#)

We are currently also developing a child and youth friendly Children's Health Queensland charter of *Healthcare Rights for Children and Young People* to display across our health service. Children, young people and their families should be able to exercise choice in healthcare services to the greatest extent possible. A consumer engagement process is underway to ensure this charter represents the young people of Queensland.

Support

Support mechanisms have been established for clinicians and support teams, to enable them to care for themselves in order to care for others. This will support CHQ's ability to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and young people.

CHQ's Wellbeing Program focusses on:

- **Relationships that matter** – cultivating a culture of support and care through meaningful relationships before, during, and after when staff need them most
- **Conversations that matter** – facilitating honest and open conversations about the challenging issues and building psychological safety for all staff around critical incidents, what's working well and post incident support pathways
- **Plans that matter** – Embedding a proactive awareness of what keeps staff well for the best days and the hardest days. Selfcare is everyone's responsibility and children and families benefit when our staff prioritise the wellbeing of themselves and their colleagues

A range of support measures are in place, including:

- Support from Line Managers
- Peer to peer support (through the Peer Support Program, currently being rolled out across CHQ).
- External, confidential employee assistance services through Lifeworks, available to all staff and their family members. Telephone and face to face support is available, via 1800 604 640.
- CHeQing In Program, on site counselling service for CHQ staff, with appointments available through LifeWorks (1800 604 640).

All staff and service providers may access CPFMS and the extended hours and after-hours Social Work service for advice and support relating to child protection concerns.

Annual Review of the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy

This Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis, incorporating input from stakeholders including children and young people.

Supporting Documents

Legislation, Policy and standard(s)

- [Child Protection Act 1999](#)
- [Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights](#)
- [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000](#)
- [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Regulation 2020 \(QLD\)](#)
- [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2020 \(QLD\)](#)
- [Human Rights Act 2019 \(QLD\)](#)

Procedures, Guidelines, Protocols

- [CHQ PROC-26405 Compliance breach management and reporting](#)
- [CHQ's Enterprise Risk Management Framework](#)
- [CHQ-GDL-02611 Reporting a reasonable/reportable suspicion of child sexual abuse or assault](#)

- [CHQ-PROC-02627 Report of suspected child in need of protection to Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women](#)
- [CHQ-GDL-02611 Reporting of a reasonable suspicion of child sexual abuse or assault](#)
- [CHQ-PROC-62108 Security provisions for children in hospital where child protection concerns exist](#)
- [CHQ-GDL-02610 Clinical Management of Possible Non-Accidental Injuries](#)
- [CHQ-PROC-02612 Our Child – When a Child/Young person in Care is Reported Missing](#)
- [CHQ-PROC-00128 Failure to attend – Child protection concerns](#)
- [CHQ-PROC-02603 Care of patients who have experienced alleged sexual abuse / assault](#)

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Consultation

Key stakeholders who reviewed this version:

- Executive Director People and Governance
- Program Manager Child Protection and Forensic Medical Service

Key stakeholders who reviewed previous version:

- Executive Director People and Governance
- Manager, Governance and Risk
- Program Manager Child Protection and Forensic Medical Service
- Director Child Protection and Forensic Medical Service
- CHQ Executive Leadership Team
- CHQ Audit and Risk Committee
- CHQ Board

Revision and approval history

Version No.	Modified by	Amendments authorised by	Approved by
1.0 01/12/2020	Director Organisation Development		Executive Director People and Culture
2.0 15/04/2021	Senior Organisational Development Specialist		Executive Director People and Culture
3.0 15/04/2021	A/Director HR Operations		Executive Director People and Governance

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Accreditation references	NSQHS Standards (1-8): Standard 1 ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems: (4-10)

Appendix 1: Definitions

What is the difference between child protection, child aware, child focused practices and Child Safe Organisations?

These four elements are all essential for keeping children and young people safe.

- **Child protection** is a tertiary intervention dedicated to protecting children and young people who have suffered significant harm or are at risk of suffering from significant harm, where the child or young person does not have a parent(s) able or willing to protect them from harm. Both clinical and parental factors might be indicators of this type of harm.
- **Child aware** practice has an early intervention and prevention focus, based on identifying parental factors which may indicate harm to a child or young person's wellbeing or safety. This practice is family-sensitive; child-inclusive; strengths-based; collaborative; and culturally competent.
- **Child focused practice** means keeping the child or young person in focus when making decisions about their lives and working in partnership with them and their families. In the context of CHQ this pertains to ensuring clinical needs and outcomes are in the best interests of the child or young person, in line with CHQ's person-centred care approach.
- **Child Safe Organisations** value children and young people and put their interests first. Child Safe Organisations incorporate child protection, child focus and child aware, as well as the additional focus of the organisational child safe principles. A Child Safe Organisation understands that safety doesn't just happen but is embedded into the organisations' culture, is understood and accepted by everyone, and is measured to ensure continuous improvement.

What is a Child Safe Organisation?²

A Child Safe Organisation puts the best interests of children and young people first.

A Child Safe Organisation is one that creates a culture, adopts strategies and acts to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people.

A Child Safe Organisation consciously and systematically:

- Creates an environment where children's safety and wellbeing is at the centre of thought, values and actions
- Places emphasis on genuine engagement with and valuing of children and young people
- Creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people
- Creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm
- Responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm.
- Establishes continuous monitoring and performance management to strengthen the capacity of the organisation to provide quality and contemporary child safe practice.

Volunteers – includes anyone providing volunteer services through an associated organisation (e.g. Children's Hospital Foundation) or who is otherwise volunteering for a specific purpose (e.g. consumer representatives).

Service providers – includes anyone who performs a service for CHQ, our children and young people and their families, including external contractors, researchers, event coordinators, educators/teachers and consultants.

Students – refers to any health professional student who is enrolled in a course or module of study with an Education Provider, or is an Externally Enrolled Scholar, who undertakes a placement at CHQ and/or performs a service for CHQ.

² Source: Australian Human Rights Commission <https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/about/what-child-safe-organisation>

Appendix 2: Alignment with Planetree person centred care certification

As part of Children's Health Queensland's ongoing commitment to providing the best care for every Queensland child, we have adopted the [Planetree](#) philosophy of care to guide our approach.

Planetree Person Centred Care Certification - Person centred care certification is an international standard for excellence in health care as defined by patients and families. With this emphasis on what matters most to patients and families about their healthcare experiences, certification for excellence in person-centred care is reserved for health care organisations that excel in not only quality and safety but also in compassion, partnerships, equity of access, and inclusive practices. These are some of the key qualities that elevate Planetree Gold Certified Hospital and Health Services from great to exceptional and most importantly, there are the organisational attributes that work well together to yield better care and health outcomes for children and young people.

Drivers for excellence

The Planetree certification criteria is organised around five drivers of excellence that depict what it takes organisationally to create a culture of person-centred care. These evidence-based building blocks of organisational culture highlight the need for a co-ordinated approach where strategies, practices, and measures are all aligned around the values of person-centred care.

1. Create organisational structures that promote engagement
2. Connect values, strategies and actions
3. Implement practices that promote partnerships
4. Know what matters
5. Use of evidence to drive improvement

Delivering excellence in person-centred care

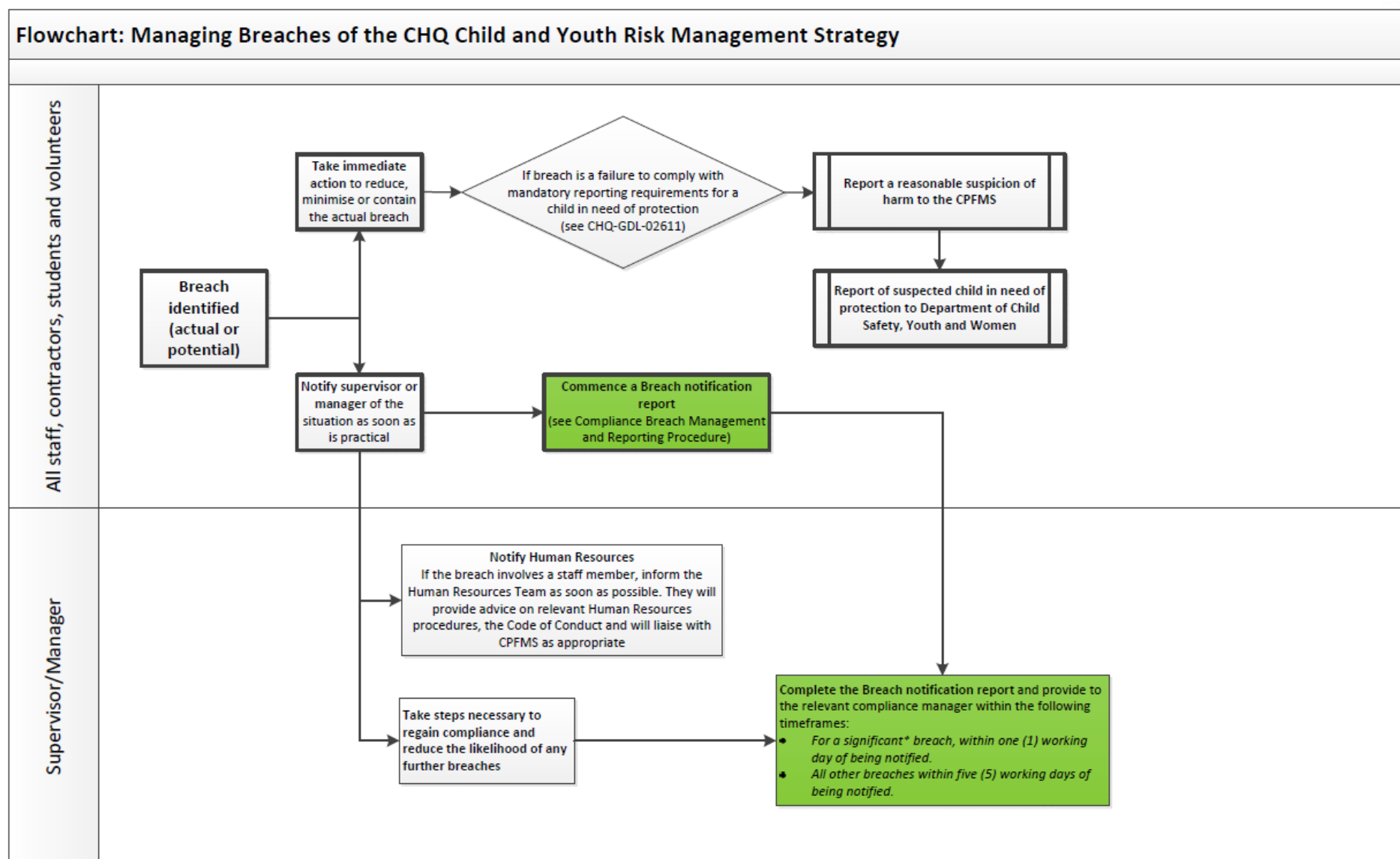
Children's Health Queensland proudly achieved **Planetree International Gold Certification in Person-Centred Care** in January 2021, making us the first healthcare organisation in Australia to do so. CHQ is now one of only 98 healthcare organisations in the world to receive Person-Centred Care Gold Certification, and the only paediatric healthcare organisation in the Southern Hemisphere.

Integrating a child safe lens



Appendix 3: Flowchart

Managing breaches of the CHQ Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy



Appendix 4

Keeping Kids Safe

Statement of Intent

All children have the right to be safe from harm, everywhere, anytime. **The safety and well-being of children is Children Health Queensland's (CHQ) highest priority.** Aligning with our commitment to delivering the best care **we are committed to creating a child safe environment for all children and young people who interact with our services.**

CHQ's principles for delivering on this commitment:

1. All children and young people have the right to be safe from harm, everywhere, anytime.
2. Safety and wellbeing of children and young people is our highest priority.
3. We create a safe environment for children and young people who use or come into contact with our services.
4. Children and young people are empowered to have a voice and participate in decisions and processes that affect them.
5. We take a connected approach to create a holistic child safe organisation.
6. Our organisational policies and practices provide the framework for a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to keeping children and young people safe.
7. Our values of Respect, Integrity, Care and Imagination guide our commitment to person centred care and places the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at the heart of all that we do.
8. Our leaders promote and act as role models in applying child safe organisation principles, practices and culture.
9. We value difference and recognise the diverse needs of our children, young people and their families and commit to high quality health care which prioritises diverse physical, cultural, emotional, spiritual and individual needs.
10. All staff, volunteers, students and service providers understand the role they play to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.
11. We are committed to *CHQ's Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy* and *CHQ's Code of Conduct for interacting with children* and will deal with any breaches in a timely manner.

Keeping Kids Safe: CHQ's Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy and CHQ's Code of Conduct for interacting with children provides a clear and consistent approach to guide and support those who work and volunteer and those who interact with our services.

