



Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Code of Conduct

March 2025

Our Commitment

St John NT is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children. We recognise the importance of providing a safe environment for all children accessing our services, activities and programs.

Our staff, volunteers, visitors and contractors should always respect and foster the dignity and self-esteem of children and empower them to speak out if they feel unsafe. In turn, St John NT aims to foster a culture where staff, volunteers, visitors and contractors can freely raise concerns about child safety. This Code of Conduct aims to provide guidance to staff, volunteers, visitors and contractors on appropriate conduct when working with children. It is intended to complement legislation, St John NT policies and professional standards.



Andrew Tombs
Chief Executive Officer

Using the Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Code of Conduct

The Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Code of Conduct is split into actions to adopt ('do') and avoid ('do not') across several key areas of conduct: professional boundaries, physical contact, cultural safety, use of language, supervisory practices, behaviour management, sexual misconduct, reporting concerns, online environments and electronic communication, privacy and confidentiality, and use of photographs and videos. We require staff and volunteers to read this Code of Conduct thoroughly and aim to understand it. If there are aspects that are unclear, ask your supervisor or manager for assistance.



Breaching The Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Code of Conduct

All staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors of St John NT are required to comply with the Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Code of Conduct. It applies in all situations—for example: at youth activities and events, when treating a casualty, in schools, during patient transport or when using digital technology. It can even apply to your actions outside of the organisation (such as your conduct in online environments).

If you breach this Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Code of Conduct, you may face disciplinary action. For serious breaches this may even be termination of your involvement with St John NT and referral to the police. St John NT recognises that there may be special situations where a staff or volunteer member may need to operate outside of this Code of Conduct, such as during an emergency.

Where possible, staff and volunteer members should always attempt to seek authorisation for any action that contravenes this Code of Conduct. You must also advise St John NT of any action(s) taken that breach this Code of Conduct as soon as possible.

Champions

The St John NT CEO will support the implementation and monitoring of this Code of Conduct. The CEO will also provide information and support to staff and volunteers to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively. All adult staff and volunteers will champion this Code of Conduct.



Definitions

Child or children means any person under the age of 18 years engaged with a St John NT service, program or activity. A child includes a Junior or Youth Member who is under the age of 18 years.

Child abuse means any act or omission that causes harm, may cause harm or pose a risk to a child's physical, emotional, psychological, developmental or spiritual health or wellbeing. Examples of child abuse include physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse, witnessing of domestic and family violence, grooming, sexual exploitation, neglect, bullying or harassment.

Child Safeguarding Officer (CSO) is an appointed staff or volunteer member of St John NT, who is responsible for providing leadership, guidance and support to any person making a report, complaint or seeking advice in relation to the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person. In some St John NT organisations, Child Safeguarding Officers may have a different title, such as Child Wellbeing Officers.

Grooming is the predatory behaviour designed to prepare a child for sexual abuse. Many perpetrators of sexual offences against children purposefully create relationships with children, their families and carers in order to establish the conditions necessary for them to abuse the child.

Harm means any action, act or activity that causes detriment

to a child's physical, emotional, psychological, developmental or spiritual health or wellbeing.

Person in authority means any adult staff or volunteer member of St John NT who has power over or responsibility for a child (this responsibility is also known as a 'special care arrangement'). All Adults in St John NT, regardless of their role, are considered persons in authority and have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to keep children safe from injury or harm.

Staff and volunteer members means any paid adult employee, volunteer, visitor or contractor or other affiliate of St John NT who is over the age of 18 years.

Rule of Three is the requirement to include another adult staff or volunteer member, child or a child's parent/ guardian or the CSO in your communication, interactions, transportation or patient care (e.g. two adults present in all situations, or one adult and a minimum of two children). For example, if you need to send a text message to a child about an event, copy their parent/ guardian or another St John NT adult staff or volunteer member into the text. Adult staff and volunteers should not be in a one-to-one situation with a child, including in online environments or when using electronic communications.

IF A CHILD IS AT IMMEDIATE RISK OF HARM, CALL TRIPLE ZERO (000).

Professional Conduct

Do ✓

- ✓ Establish and maintain a child safe environment in the course of your work.
- ✓ Remember that as an adult you are in a position of authority and power, and you should always act within the confines of your role and duties.
- ✓ Communicate what your role is to children and what the role of the child is.
- ✓ Always act as a positive role model to others.
- ✓ Treat children and their families with respect, fairness, professionalism, kindness and courtesy.
- ✓ Report any conduct by other adults that is questionable (e.g. that could be seen as favouritism, overly familiar, inappropriate or 'grooming').
- ✓ Recognise that as a St John NT adult staff or volunteer member, you are a 'person in authority' with power over a child. This means that you have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to keep children safe from injury or harm.



Do Not ✗

- ✗ Engage in any activity with a child that is likely to cause 'harm', including participating in behaviour that would constitute abuse, neglect, exploitation, harassment, grooming, discrimination or victimisation.
- ✗ Develop a special relationship with a child in St John NT, including adopting an ongoing welfare role with the child (e.g. acting as their personal counsellor, tutor or coach) or seeking contact with a child outside of St John NT's programs, services or activities (e.g. attending private social function at a child's request).
- ✗ Participate in behaviour that may be interpreted as inappropriate, including the use of language (e.g. profane or sexualised) or discussion of topics that are adult in nature.
- ✗ Take a child, that is engaged with St John NT, to your home.
- ✗ Give personal gifts or special favours to a child engaged with St John NT. Only provide gifts where authorisation is obtained from a supervisor or manager (e.g. farewell gift from the group). Any approved gift should be presented to a child publicly (i.e. in the presence of other children, adult staff or volunteers or parents/guardians).
- ✗ Consume around or supply alcohol or (illicit) drugs to children engaged with St John NT.

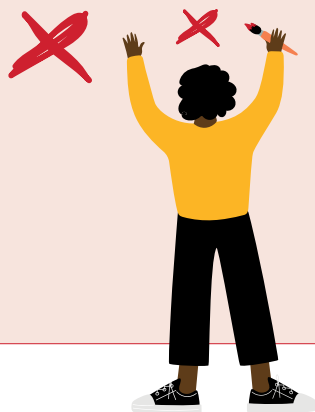
Physical Contact

Do ✓

- ✓ Seek permission to touch a child (e.g. during a first aid demonstration or treating) and avoid unnecessary touching. Preferably, ask children to demonstrate on each another. Where touch is unavoidable, use non-intrusive touch and avoid touching private areas of the body, e.g. breast, buttocks and genitals.
- ✓ Proactively address unnecessary physical contact initiated by children (i.e. with you or others), by gently reminding the child of personal boundaries. Aim to substitute boundary-crossing behaviour with appropriate behaviours (e.g. fist bumps or hi-fives).
- ✓ If a child asks you not to touch them, respect their wishes.

Do Not ✗

- ✗ Initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child, including doing things for the child they can do for themselves (e.g. toileting), unless delivering a medical service where touch is necessary to assess or treat the child.



Cultural Safety

Do ✓

- ✓ Respect the rights, dignity, diversity and worth of all children, regardless of difference.
- ✓ Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, culturally and linguistically diverse and migrant and refugee backgrounds, gender and sexually diverse children, and children with a disability.
- ✓ Use inclusive language.

Do Not ✗

- ✗ Treat a child unfavourably or discriminate because of disability, age, gender identity, race, culture, class, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- ✗ Express personal views on culture, race, ability, gender identity or sexuality in the presence of children.

Use of Language

Do ✓

- ✓ Speak to a child in a way that is professional and respectful.
- ✓ Address any incidence of, or situation where, inappropriate, profane or negative language is being used (e.g. by a child engaged with St John NT, parent/guardian, or staff or volunteers). Aim to reinforce the desired behaviour.
- ✓ Ensure that all communications are safe, respectful and promote a positive image of St John NT.

Do Not ✗

- ✗ Make inappropriate comments about a child's appearance, including comments that are overly flattering, complimentary or sexualised.
- ✗ Never use inappropriate, profane or sexualised language with or around children.
- ✗ Make jokes of a sexualised nature.
- ✗ Seek information of an intimate nature about a child (e.g. enquiring about their past sexual activity or sexual or gender identity).
- ✗ Discuss your own sexual history or sexual preferences, or other details about your personal life that may be considered inappropriate, with a child.

Behaviour Management

Do ✓

- ✓ Uphold the principles of equity in working with children (e.g. making reasonable adjustments if possible).
- ✓ Adhere to the Youth Member Behaviour Management Policy (or other relevant policy), including the available responses for breaches to agreed standards of behaviour.
- ✓ Deal with unwanted behaviour proactively and promptly.
- ✓ Provide clear direction to children.
- ✓ Aim to boost a child's confidence and provide them with encouragement.

Do Not ✗

- ✗ Single out a child to belittle them, or use negative language about them, in front of others.
- ✗ Use physical means to discipline or control a child.
- ✗ Threaten or frighten a child to achieve behavioural compliance.



Supervisory Practices

Do ✓

- ✓ Uphold adult-to-child ratios specified by St John NT.
- ✓ Avoid being in a one-to-one situation with a child engaged with St John NT.
- ✓ Report any instance where you find yourself (or another St John NT Adult) alone with a child to an adult supervisor/manager or Child Safeguarding Officer.
- ✓ Where a one-to-one situation is unavoidable, keep a door open and try and stay in view of others and report it to your supervisor or Child Safeguarding Officer immediately.

Do Not ✗

- ✗ Allow a child engaged with St John NT to leave an event, activity or program with an unknown person (including St John NT personnel) without the prior authorisation of the child's parent/ guardian.
- ✗ Deliberately facilitate situations that would place you in a one-to-one situation with a child.
- ✗ Transport children alone. In the unlikely event that you need to transport a child alone, direct the child to sit in the back seat of the vehicle (not the front seat) and report the situation with an adult supervisor/ manager or Child Safeguarding Officer.
- ✗ Share sleeping quarters with children. Where an adult presence is needed or unavoidable, another adult should be present and/or more than one child (at a minimum, employ the 'Rule of Three').

Privacy And Confidentiality

Do ✓

- ✓ Respect the privacy and confidentiality of children and handle personal information in line with St John NT's Privacy and Information Handling Policies.
- ✓ Understand the limitations of privacy and confidentiality regarding child abuse reporting. If you believe or suspect a child is being harmed, is at risk of harm, or an allegation or disclosure has been made, this must be reported.

Do Not ✗

- ✗ Ignore or disregard concerns, suspicions, allegations or disclosures of child abuse or harm, even if you are asked to keep something a 'secret'.



Sexual Misconduct

Do ✓

- ✓ Report any suspicions, disclosures, allegations or complaints relating to the safety of children to a Child Safeguarding Officer immediately.
- ✓ Disclose to the organisation if you are a person in a position of authority, or you become aware of another adult who is in a position of authority, who is involved in a relationship with a child.



Do Not ✗

- ✗ Form an intimate relationship with any child over whom you have direct authority, even if they are above the age of consent.
- ✗ Engage in a sexual act with any child.
- ✗ Participate in sexual or intimate behaviour while in a St John NT environment, including between consenting members above the legal age of consent.
- ✗ Flirt with a child involved in the organisation.
- ✗ Use sexual innuendo or participate in sexually suggestive behaviour with a child engaged with St John NT.
- ✗ Undress, or expose yourself, in front of a child.
- ✗ Remove a child's clothing, unless there is a medical emergency, and another person is with you (e.g. to use a defibrillator).

Reporting Concerns

Do ✓

- ✓ Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are disclosing that they or another child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.
- ✓ Be vigilant and proactive about child safety and report all allegations, suspicions or concerns promptly.
- ✓ Understand and comply with reporting obligations for child safeguarding and/or legislation.
- ✓ If unsure or in doubt, seek advice (e.g. from a Child Safeguarding Officer).

Do Not ✗

- ✗ Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions, allegations or disclosures of child abuse or harm.
- ✗ Delay reporting. Report any concern, suspicion, allegation or disclosure immediately (or as soon as is reasonably practicable following learning about it).

Online Environments and Electronic Communications

Do ✓

- ✓ Use a professional and appropriate tone in all electronic or online interactions, especially with children.
- ✓ Only communicate with children electronically in relation to your St John NT role (e.g. to provide notification about upcoming training, activities or events). Where communicating directly with individual children is unavoidable, always employ the 'Rule of Three', such as opting to include the child's parent/guardian in the communication.*
- ✓ Tell your supervisor or a Child Safeguarding Officer if a child communicates with you electronically outside of your role.



Do Not ✗

- ✗ Communicate directly with a child engaged with St John NT through personal or private channels (e.g. by social media, email, instant messaging, chat rooms, gaming sites, texting) outside of St John NT's services, events or programs, your position description or without oversight.
- ✗ Request that a child keeps communication with you or another adult a secret from their parent/guardian.
- ✗ Engage with children online in a way that may be considered to be abusive or inappropriate, including the use of language or topics that are adult in nature (e.g. profane or sexualised) or behaviours that may constitute grooming.
- ✗ 'Friend' or follow a child engaged with St John NT, or their family members, on social media.**
- ✗ Discuss or show content of an intimate, mature or adult nature to children.

** Some staff and volunteer member roles requires them to manage social media pages, and this may require the member to 'friend' a child. Here, communication must relate strictly to the staff or volunteer member's role. Contact outside of that role is prohibited. Staff and volunteers should never engage in conduct that would contravene St John NT policy, procedures or this Code of Conduct. Where possible, staff and volunteers should apply the 'Rule of three' (e.g. including another adult in correspondence with a child).*

*** St John NT recognises that in some circumstances, a pre-existing relationship exists between a St John NT Adult staff or volunteer member and a child and/or their family who are engaged in a St John NT service, program or activity. In this circumstance, the St John NT member should disclose this pre-existing relationship to their line manager/supervisor.*

Photographs and Video

Do ✓

- ✓ Seek permission to photograph or video a child (from both from the child and their parent/ guardian) prior to taking the photograph.
- ✓ Delete photos and videos from personal devices (i.e. once uploaded to St John NT platforms).
- ✓ Ensure any photo/video subjects are appropriately clothed. Avoid photographs/videos taken in bathrooms/change rooms or of children wearing swimming costumes/bathers.
- ✓ Only photograph/video a child engaged with St John NT for purposes that relate to their participation in St John NT Youth Program.

Do Not ✗

- ✗ Store photographs or video of a child engaged with St John NT for personal use. Photographs and video taken of children engaged with St John NT must only be used for official St John NT purposes.
- ✗ Upload, share or publish photos, video or audio recordings of a child engaged with St John NT to any platform without the consent of their parent/ guardian (and ideally, the child).
- ✗ Send photo, audio or video content directly to a child engaged with St John NT without the consent of their parent/guardian.
- ✗ Upload photographs or video of a child engaged with St John NT onto personal storage devices or the cloud.



This Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Code of Conduct was developed in accordance with the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards, ensuring a commitment to child safety, protection, and best-practice healthcare governance. Specifically, this Code aligns with the following NSQHS Standards:

Standard 1 – Clinical Governance: Establishing leadership, accountability, and risk management systems to ensure child safeguarding is embedded in our governance framework.

Standard 2 – Partnering with Consumers: Engaging with children, families, and community stakeholders to ensure child safety policies reflect consumer rights and culturally safe practices.

Standard 5 – Comprehensive Care: Ensuring the provision of person-centered, trauma-informed care that identifies and mitigates risks to child well-being.

Standard 6 – Communicating for Safety: Implementing structured reporting and escalation pathways for child protection concerns.

Standard 8 – Recognising and Responding to Acute Deterioration: Supporting staff in identifying and responding to signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation in children.

St John NT is committed to the continuous improvement of child safeguarding practices, with regular reviews and updates to this Code in alignment with national regulatory frameworks and best-practice guidelines for child protection.



Further Information

Please contact the Child Safeguarding Officer on safeguarding@stjohnnt.asn.au or 0448 073 163.