

### 1. CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT

The Child Safe Standards require organisations that provide services for children and young people to have a Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children and young people. (Child Safe Standard 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe).

All paid and unpaid staff, Board members, volunteers, students, interns and trainees of Starick are required to read, understand and sign the Child Safe Code of Conduct.

### 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Child Safe Code of Conduct is to identify positive child safe behaviours and behaviours that Starick considers unacceptable, including the use of technology and social media when working with children and young people.

### 3. SCOPE

This Child Safe Code of Conduct provides a clear set of rules and behaviour expectations in line with Starick's culture and values for its paid and unpaid staff, Board members, volunteers, students, interns and trainees when coming into contact with children and young people. All stakeholders are responsible for understanding their role in promoting the safety, wellbeing and empowerment of children.

### 4. POSITIVE CHILD SAFE BEHAVIOURS

This Child Safe Code of Conduct commits Starick's paid and unpaid staff, Board members, volunteers, students, interns and trainees to the following positive child safe behaviour strategies:

- children and young people are informed about their rights
- children and young people are treated with respect
- children and young people's ideas and opinions are actively sought and considered in decisions that affect them
- children and young people's individual needs are advocated for
- complaints and disclosures made by children and young people are taken seriously
- service provision is culturally, developmentally, and linguistically inclusive and responsive

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- communication is open and two way with families to promote child safety and wellbeing
- positive role modelling of communications, interactions and supervision of children and young people
- conflicts of interest are declared and addressed to avoid personal interests conflicting with the best interests of children and young people and the responsibilities of Starick
- respect the privacy of children and young people and only disclose information with people who have a need to know
- breaches of this Code of Conduct are reported to the CEO
- Department of Communities is contacted if there are concerns a child is being abused or neglected
- police are called if a child has been or is at serious risk of harm

### 5. UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

The following unacceptable behaviours are a breach of this Code of Conduct;

- ignoring or disregarding any concerns, suspicions, or disclosures of child abuse
- shaming, humiliating, coercing, belittling, or degrading children or young people
- discriminating against any child or young person based on their age, gender identity, sex, race, cultural or sexual orientation
- displaying violent behaviour towards a child or young person
- engaging in any activity with a child or young person that is likely to harm them in any way
- initiating physical contact with a child or young person
- showing favouritism, giving gifts or benefits to one child or young person over others
- arranging personal contact or online contact, with children or young people outside of Starick's services, programs, and activities
- photographing or videoing a child or young person without their verbal consent and the written consent of the parent or carer
- use of a personal mobile phone or any personal portable device to photograph or video a child or young person
- posting any photos or videos taken in the course of work on social media
- working with children or young people whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- using inappropriate language in the presence of children

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- doing anything in contravention of Starick’s policies and procedures or this Code of Conduct

### 6. CONCERNING BEHAVIOURS

The following concerning behaviours, either demonstrated or observed by Starick stakeholders could indicate a pattern of behaviour that poses a risk to the safety of children such as;

- suggesting physically disciplining a child with other adults
- repeatedly being alone with a child when there is no professional reason for doing so
- showing favour to one child over others
- a staff member encouraging a child to spend time alone with them

### 7. CONSEQUENCES OF BREACHING THE CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT

Any paid and unpaid staff, Board members, volunteers, students, interns and trainees who breach Starick’s Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary action. This can include increased supervision, appointment to an alternative role, suspension or termination from the organisation.

### 8. REPORTING A BREACH OF THE CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT

All paid and unpaid staff, Board members, volunteers, students, interns and trainees, and families are encouraged to speak up if they have concerns about the safety of children and young people. Reports about a breach of this Code of Conduct must be reported to the CEO.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with Starick’s Child Protection Policy and may be subject to referral to the WA Police.

If a staff member thinks this Code of Conduct has been breached by another staff member, they must;

- act in the best interests of the child or young person
- act promptly to ensure that the child or young person is safe
- promptly follow Starick’s reporting procedures

Reports will be kept confidential. However, a law enforcement agency may access the identity of the reporter if needed in connection with the investigation of an alleged serious offence against a child under the Children and Community Services Act 2004.

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Starick's Child Safe Organisation Procedure provides more information about reporting obligations to external authorities. [Child Safe Organisation Procedure.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

### 9. DEFINITIONS

**A child:** All children and young people under the age of 18 years.

**Allegation:** A claim of OR assertion that someone has done something wrong, which has not been proven.

**Child Protection:** The measure and structure to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation, coercion, and violence affecting children.

**Code of Conduct:** Conduct and behaviour expected of all employees of Starick whether by way of appointment, contract, temporary arrangement, volunteering, or student placement.

**Child Safe Code of Conduct:** Conduct and behaviour expectations of all employees working for Starick whether by way of appointment, contract, temporary arrangement, volunteering, or student placement that promotes the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of children in line with Starick's culture and values.

**Complaint:** Any suggestion of abuse or harm that is disclosed, witnessed, or demonstrated by a child. Typically, three categories of behaviour are the subject of a complaint;

- *concerning behaviour* – behaviours or patterns of behaviour that are a risk to the safety of children. This also refers to ambiguous behaviours that are potentially inappropriate for children to be exposed to but may not necessarily be indicators of abuse occurring. The sharing of inappropriate jokes may be an example of this.
- *unacceptable behaviour* – behaviours that constitute a breach of the Starick's Code of Conduct
- *criminal conduct* – conduct that, if proven, would constitute a criminal offence.

**Criminal Act:** An act harmful not only to an individual or individuals but also to a community, society, or the state ("a public wrong"). Such acts are forbidden and punishable by law.

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**Culturally, developmentally, and linguistically responsive:** Refers to recognising and valuing all cultural groups; respecting diversity, life experiences and strengths; and encouraging pride.

**Disclosure:** A child tells you they or someone else is being abused or harmed.

**Emotional abuse:** Behaviour towards a child that is likely to damage a child's self-esteem or social competence. Examples include:

- Teasing a child
- Yelling at a child
- Bullying a child
- Persistent criticism and discrediting of a child
- Persistent rejection of or hostility towards a child
- Refusing to acknowledge a child's worth and the legitimacy of their needs
- Deliberately preventing a child from forming friendships
- Depriving a child of essential stimulation and responsiveness
- Encouraging a child to engage in destructive, antisocial behaviour
- Exposing a child to family violence
- Making a child feel worthless, unloved, alone or frightened

**Psychological abuse:** The term 'emotional abuse' includes psychological abuse (the sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill treatment of a child or young person through behaviours including, threatening, isolating, neglecting, discrediting, misleading, disregarding, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement) and exposure to domestic and family violence, which causes serious emotional, psychological and physical harm to children as well as placing them at increased likelihood of abuse and neglect.

**Evidence informed:** Refers to combining information from research and academic studies with practice expertise and the views and experiences of the Domestic and Family Violence sector to inform decision making and effective practice.

**Failure to prevent abuse:** An obvious or very clearly unreasonable failure to respond to information strongly indicating that another adult working at the organisation poses a serious risk of abusing a child.

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## Child Safe Code of Conduct Policy

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**Failure to report abuse:** Knowing or believing, that a child has been abused and not reporting it to management and the WA Police.

**Grooming:** A process by which a person prepares a child, significant adults and the environment for the abuse of the child. Specific goals include gaining access to the child and online communication. Pornography can be used as tools for grooming.

**Neglect:** Behaviour by a person responsible for the care of a child (such as a parent, carer or staff member if the child is in their care) that constitutes a failure to act in ways consistent with accepted community standards about what is necessary to meet the developmental needs of a child.

Examples include;

- Depriving a child of necessities such as food and drink, clothing, critical medical care or treatment, or shelter
- Failing to protect a child from abuse such as, failing to report abuse when a child discloses it or when a staff member observes it
- Exposing a child to a harmful environment (such as, an environment where there is illicit drug use or illicit drug manufacturing)
- Failing to adequately supervise a child, resulting in injury or harm

**Parent:** A child's mother, father or carer who has parental responsibility for that child.

**Physical abuse:** The intentional or reckless use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child's health, development or dignity, or which has a high likelihood of resulting in such harm. It may also include the threat of abuse where the child reasonably fears it may occur.

Examples include:

- Hitting, striking, punching, kicking or slapping
- Engaging in rough physical games
- Threatening to hurt a child through words or gestures, regardless of whether the person intends to apply force
- Using hostile force towards a child and/or a pattern of hostile or unreasonable and seriously inappropriate physical conduct.

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**Respectful relationships:** Refers to relationships that are built on trust, respect, compromise and understanding of one another.

**Sexual abuse:** Any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or differing to accepted community standards. This can include both sexual offences (a child-related criminal offence of a sexual nature) as well as sexual misconduct (conduct with, towards or in the presence of a child that is sexual in nature but is not a sexual offence).

Examples include:

- Sexual touching of a child
- Sexual contact with a child
- Masturbating in front of a child or exposing genitals
- Possessing or creating child abuse material
- Sharing sexually explicit photos of a child
- Exposing a child to pornography or other indecent material
- Giving a child gifts, food, money, attention or affection in exchange for sexual activities or images
- Not respecting the privacy of a child when they are using the bathroom or changing
- Communicating (including online) with a child about romantic, intimate or sexual feelings for a child
- Using a camera to record a child while they are dressing, bathing or using the bathroom
- Comments that express a desire to act in a sexual manner with a child
- Using sexual language or gestures in the presence of children
- Sexual comments, conversations or communications with a child

**Wellbeing:** encompasses the health of the whole person including physical, social, mental and emotional.

**Unacceptable behaviour:** Participating in behaviour with a child that is illegal, unsafe or abusive.

### EVALUATION AND REVIEW

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This policy will be reviewed in accordance with **Document Control Procedure** as part of a formal evaluation process or as practical application requires it. Comments and suggestions from our stakeholders, including staff, children and families will be incorporated.

### RELATED STARICK POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Code of Conduct
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Safe Organisation Procedure
- Complaints and Allegations Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Incident Reporting Policy and Procedure
- Record Management Policy

### RELATED DOCUMENTS

- A Guide to Child Safe Standards, NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian
- Consulting with children and young people Resource Toolkit, Starick in partnership with the Perth Metropolitan Eastern Corridor Refuges
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, Australian Human Rights Commission
- Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations 1989

### RELEVANT ACTS AND REGULATIONS

- Children and Community Services Act 2004
- Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (the Act)
- Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004
- Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Regulations 2005

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