

Child Safety POLICY

Title: Intake
Policy No: 528-5

Policy Statement:

The Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (Child Safety) has a legislative responsibility to respond to information received about harm or risk of harm to a child, or an unborn child who may be at risk of harm after birth.

Child Safety is committed to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights. The *Human Rights Act 2019*, requires Child Safety to act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and, when making a decision, to give proper consideration to human rights.

Intake is the first phase of the child protection continuum and is delivered through a statewide intake service. Its purpose is to:

- receive information about child protection concerns from community members, service providers and government and non-government agencies
- provide a response to the information in accordance with Child Safety's responsibilities
- inform the community about the role of Child Safety and provide information about child protection services.

An authorised officer will collect as much relevant information as possible from the person making contact with Child Safety in order to assess and determine the appropriate level of response to child protection concerns, either a child concern report or a notification.

The safe care and connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with family, community, culture and country will be a key consideration in decision making by Child Safety staff.

Principles:

- The safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child, both throughout childhood and the rest of the child's life, are paramount.
- Every child has a right to protection from harm.
- Statutory powers should be exercised in a way that is open, fair and respects the rights of the child and their family.
- Child Safety staff will act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and obligations under the *Human Rights Act 2019*.
- The five elements of the child placement principle (prevention, partnership, placement, participation and connection) under the *Child Protection Act 1999*, section 5C, apply to any processes, decisions and actions taken for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child.

Objectives:

This policy aims to ensure that Child Safety staff:

- provide accurate and timely responses to information received during the intake phase of the child protection continuum
- recognise whether human rights are affected by a decision or action and only limit rights proportionately and reasonably as appropriate in the circumstances.

Scope:

This policy refers to decisions and actions of Child Safety staff when responding to information received about harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, or an unborn child who may be at risk of harm after birth.

A child concern report will be the appropriate response for those matters where any of the following are identified:

- child protection concerns are received about a child, or an unborn child, that do not meet the threshold for a notification, that is the child or unborn child is not reasonably suspected to be in need of protection, or in need of protection after birth
- there is alleged risk of harm to an unborn child prior to, or during, the birth process, but there is no identified risk to the child after birth
- the child protection concerns do not meet the threshold for a notification, but involve a possible criminal offence in relation to a child that must be reported to the Queensland Police Service in line with the *Child Protection Act 1999*, section 14(2).

A notification will be the appropriate response when the information received meets the threshold of harm or risk of harm and it is reasonably suspected that a child is in need of protection, or an unborn child will be in need of protection after birth.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The roles and responsibilities of Child Safety staff in relation to intake is outlined in the Child Safety Practice Manual, Receive and respond at intake, and associated resources.

Authority:

Child Protection Act 1999, sections 7(a)-(e), (k), (l), (n) and (o), 14, 21A, 22, 159M and 186.

Delegations:

Refer to instruments of delegation for delegations relevant to intake decisions.

Records File No.: CHS/01224
Date of approval: 20 December 2019
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Date to be reviewed: 01 January 2023

Office: Child and Family Operations
Help Contact: Operational Support

Links:

Procedures

Child Safety Practice Manual

Related Legislation

Human Rights Act 2019

Public Guardian Act 2014

Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009

Related Policies

Investigation and assessment (386) policy

Structured Decision Making (407) policy

Decisions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (641)

Rescinded policies

528-4 Intake

385-6 Child concern report

387-6 Notification

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