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# MANAGING CHILD SAFETY BREACHES AND INCIDENTS

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The Eastern Community Legal Centre (ECLC) is responsible for ensuring that all staff and volunteers that provide direct or indirect services to children understand how to behave with child clients and children in the community.

In addition to having a current Working with Children Check card, all staff and volunteers are responsible for:

1. Demonstrating safe behaviour in the workplace;
2. Demonstrating culturally safe behaviour in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, culturally and linguistically diverse children, and children with a disability; and
3. Adhering to internal procedures in cases of alleged child abuse or risk.

What happens if you breach child safety or there is an incident?

## **Staff**

If you are alleged to have breached your conduct around child safety or you are involved in a child-safe incident, then you will be managed according to the Counselling and Disciplinary Procedure in ECLC's Enterprise Agreement 2013-16 (appendix B).

Where required, a report about the alleged breach or child safety incident will be made to the relevant authorities.

ECLC will decide if an employee or volunteer should be stood down or suspended from their role while waiting on the outcome of an investigation.

ECLC may also take the following action:

- prevent you from having contact with children
- transfer you to other duties
- ensure that you have additional support and supervision at work
- direct you not to discuss the matter with other workers
- request you return equipment and/or restrict your access to documents and ECLC's systems.

If the breach is considered serious, then you may be instantly dismissed under clause 27.4 of the Eastern Community Legal Centre Enterprise Agreement 2013-16.

## Volunteers

If you are alleged to have breached your conduct around child safety or you are involved in a child-safe incident, the allegation or incident will be thoroughly investigated in accordance with the principles of natural justice and the Volunteer Grievance Procedure. If appropriate, then you will be stood down while you wait for the outcome of an investigation, and you may have your engagement terminated.

Where required, a report about the alleged breach or child safety incident will be made to the relevant authorities.

How does ECLC reduce the risk of child safety breaches and incidents?

ECLC is committed to mitigating the risk to children and young people by:

- Having a strong organisational position on child safety.
- Holding ongoing training for staff and volunteers in child safety.
- Enforcing and maintaining current Working with Children Checks and Nationally Co-ordinated Criminal History Reports for staff and volunteers.
- Including child safety as a Risk Category on ECLC's Risk Register.
- Regularly monitoring and improving current and future controls of child safety risk, including quarterly review by senior staff and the Finance, Audit and Risk Sub-Committee.
- Where possible, having two ECLC members (staff and/or volunteer) with current Working with Children Checks to be present when providing direct services to people under the age of 18 years where the primary client is the young person who is not receiving ECLC services in partnership with other Child Safe organisations, e.g. in a school class.
- Where possible, providing direct services in an environment that allows the client to be visible to others but not within earshot of others (e.g. glass-walled interview space).
- Enforcing staff and volunteers to hold current Working with Children Check cards and to get checks for new staff and volunteers and that they notify the Department of Justice and Regulation of any changes with their Working with Children Checks within 21 days of starting their employment with ECLC.
- Enforcing staff and volunteers to notify ECLC of any change in their circumstances which could lead to a negative notice.

Who can you contact for more information?

You can email [eclc@eclc.org.au](mailto:eclc@eclc.org.au) or talk with ECLC's Director of People and Shared Services on phone (03) 9285 4822.