



Policy

Key Elements of Participant Safety and Wellbeing

Endorsed by: CEO

Document Owner: Organisational Management

Section 1: Preamble

Goulburn Options is committed to ensuring the safety, dignity, and wellbeing of all participants. We recognise that upholding participant safety is a shared responsibility that requires proactive planning, skilled and ethical staff, strong leadership, and a culture of continuous improvement.

This policy outlines the systems, practices, and expectations that underpin a safe and inclusive service environment. These include physical safety, risk management, behaviour support, cultural awareness, and protective practices that prevent harm and promote the rights of all people, including children and young people.

Goulburn Options will:

- Ensure all environments and service spaces are physically safe, accessible, and well maintained;
- Promote cultural safety and actively prevent discrimination;
- Complete rigorous safety screening for all staff, volunteers, and students;
- Assess and manage risks in collaboration with participants and support persons;
- Protect and empower children and young people through child-safe practices;
- Support safe and ethical behaviour support practices that reduce restrictive interventions;
- Manage medication in a safe, person-centred, and compliant manner;
- Ensure all transport is planned and delivered safely;
- Respond to and prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation;
- Implement clear systems for incident reporting, response, and continuous improvement;
- Provide staff with training, supervision, and resources to meet their duty of care.

This policy supports the consistent delivery of high-quality, safe, and respectful services that align with the NDIS Practice Standards, Child Safe Standards, and the values of Goulburn Options.

Section 2: Policy Statement

2.1 Physical Environment

Goulburn Options is committed to maintaining safe, accessible, and inclusive environments that support the health, dignity, and wellbeing of all participants.

The organisation will:

- Identify and minimise physical hazards across all service environments, including vehicles, buildings, outdoor areas, and equipment;
- Comply with all relevant legislation, regulations, and community standards relating to environmental safety, including manual handling, infection control, fire safety, vehicle and water safety, and public health;
- Conduct regular audits and maintenance checks to ensure all spaces and equipment are fit for purpose and do not pose undue risk to participants or staff;
- Encourage and support staff and participants to report environmental concerns, hazards, or maintenance needs promptly;
- Review and monitor compliance through the Goulburn Options compliance register, continuous improvement register, and internal audit schedule.

2.2 Safety Screening

To uphold the safety of participants, Goulburn Options requires all staff, volunteers, and student placements to complete mandatory screening prior to any engagement in participant-facing roles.

This includes:

- A current NDIS Worker Screening Check
- A current Working with Children Check
- Referee checks and a structured interview process
- Verification of relevant qualifications, licences, and certifications.

All checks are recorded and stored securely in the personnel file. Individuals are not permitted to commence work with participants until all required clearances have been obtained and verified.

2.3 Cultural Safety and Awareness

Goulburn Options is committed to creating a culturally safe and inclusive environment for all participants, staff, and volunteers. We acknowledge and respect the diverse backgrounds, identities, and experiences of every individual, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and LGBTQIA+ individuals.

All staff and volunteers will:

- Be provided with training to develop cultural awareness and cultural competence;
- Recognise and value each participant's cultural identity and support their right to express it;
- Understand how unconscious bias and systemic discrimination can impact safety and wellbeing;
- Take steps to actively reduce discriminatory attitudes and behaviours in service delivery and the workplace.

Cultural safety will be promoted through ongoing learning, open dialogue, and regular review of practices, ensuring all participants feel respected, heard, and supported in a way that aligns with their values and experiences.

2.4 Risk Assessment and Management

Effective risk management is central to participant safety and wellbeing. Goulburn Options supports a proactive and collaborative approach to identifying and managing risk.

The organisation will:

- Complete a comprehensive risk assessment for each participant during intake and onboarding;
- Include specific risks relating to personal safety, health, environment, behaviours of concern, and any identified vulnerabilities;
- Ensure all relevant risks and strategies are documented in the participant's individual Risk Assessment and communicated to staff;
- Conduct In-Home Safety Assessments for services delivered in participants' homes;
- Regularly review risk assessments and update them in response to changes in participant needs, environments, or incidents;
- Involve families, carers, and guardians where appropriate to support participants who may not fully understand or be equipped to manage their own risks.

All staff and volunteers receive training in risk identification, prevention, and response.

2.5 Children and Young People

Goulburn Options is committed to upholding the rights, safety, and wellbeing of all children and young people who access our services. We recognise that children and young people have unique needs and vulnerabilities and are entitled to feel safe, respected, and heard at all times.

The organisation will:

- Promote a child-safe culture that empowers children and young people to participate in decisions that affect them;
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities under child protection laws and the Child Safe Standards;
- Provide child-specific risk assessments and safety plans;
- Ensure that any concerns, disclosures, or suspicions of harm are taken seriously and responded to promptly in line with our Incident Management and Complaints and Feedback policies;
- Engage with families, carers, and guardians as partners in supporting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

All staff and volunteers will receive child safety training as part of their induction and ongoing professional development and will be supported to apply a child-centred approach in their day-to-day work.

2.6 Behaviour Support and Eliminating Restrictive Practice

Goulburn Options promotes the rights of participants to live free from unnecessary restriction and to be supported using positive, respectful, and evidence-based strategies.

The organisation will:

- Use Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) approaches to understand and respond to behaviours of concern in a person-centred and strengths-based way;

- Access and engage registered Behaviour Support Practitioners for the development and review of individualised behaviour support plans;
- Ensure all restrictive practices are only used as a last resort, are clearly documented in a behaviour support plan, and are approved in accordance with NDIS Commission requirements;
- Provide staff with the necessary training to implement plans safely and ethically;
- Respond to any unauthorised use of restrictive practices through the incident management system and notify the appropriate regulatory bodies;
- Monitor and review restrictive practices to reduce or eliminate their use over time.

2.7 Medication Management

Goulburn Options is committed to ensuring the safe, accurate, and person-centred management of participant medication. Staff involved in any part of the medication process must adhere to the organisation's Medication Policy and relevant legislative and regulatory requirements.

The organisation will:

- Ensure that only trained and competent staff support participants with medication;
- Maintain up-to-date medication records for each participant, including medication type, dosage, administration times, and any relevant allergies or side effects;
- Require written consent and documented instructions from the participant, their guardian, or a medical professional before any medication is administered or prompted;
- Support participants to be as independent as possible in managing their medication, in line with their capacity and support plan;
- Conduct regular reviews and audits of medication management practices and documentation to ensure safety, accuracy, and compliance.

Any medication errors, refusals, or adverse reactions must be reported immediately and documented in accordance with the Incident Management Policy. Staff will also escalate any concerns to a medical professional or emergency services when required.

2.8 Transport of Participants

Goulburn Options is committed to ensuring the safe, respectful, and inclusive transport of participants in line with the National Safe Transport Principles and the individual needs of each person.

The organisation will:

- Only permit staff and volunteers who hold a valid driver's licence and have completed required training to transport participants;
- Ensure that all vehicles used for transport are roadworthy, regularly maintained, insured, and fitted with appropriate safety equipment (including seatbelts, restraints, and accessibility features where required);
- Support participants to travel as independently as possible, consistent with their goals and abilities;
- Take into account each participant's communication, behavioural, sensory, medical, or mobility needs when planning transport;
- Document transport arrangements in the participant's support plan and obtain appropriate consent where relevant.

Transport incidents, near misses, or breakdowns must be reported and recorded through the Incident Management system. Staff will follow emergency procedures and contact participants' support persons if needed.

2.9 Preventing and Responding to Abuse and Neglect

Goulburn Options has a duty of care to protect participants from all forms of abuse and neglect. We are committed to creating a safe environment where participants feel secure, are treated with dignity, and are supported to speak up if something does not feel right.

The organisation will:

- Implement robust prevention strategies, including staff and volunteer screening, training, and clear codes of conduct;
- Educate staff and volunteers to recognise the signs and risk indicators of abuse (including physical, emotional, sexual, financial, and institutional abuse) and neglect;
- Empower participants to understand their rights, express concerns, and access support when they feel unsafe;
- Take all allegations, disclosures, or suspicions of abuse seriously and respond promptly in line with Goulburn Options' Complaints and Feedback Policy and Incident Management procedures;
- Ensure all reportable incidents are escalated appropriately and in compliance with relevant legislative reporting obligations, including to the NDIS Commission and law enforcement where required.

All staff and volunteers are required to complete training on recognising and responding to abuse and neglect and must act immediately if they have concerns about a participant's safety.

2.10 Incident Management and Record Keeping

Goulburn Options maintains clear procedures for responding to and recording incidents that impact the safety, wellbeing, or dignity of participants. All incidents, regardless of severity, must be reported and reviewed in a timely manner to ensure appropriate follow-up and continuous improvement.

The organisation will:

- Require all staff and volunteers to report any incidents, near misses, or hazards within 24 hours of occurrence using the approved reporting systems;
- Ensure incident reports include a clear and factual account of what occurred, who was involved, any witnesses, actions taken, and any follow-up steps required;
- Escalate and notify relevant regulatory bodies, including the NDIS Commission, where the incident meets the threshold for a Reportable Incident;
- Review incidents regularly to identify trends, implement corrective actions, and reduce future risk;
- Store all incident records securely, with access limited to authorised personnel only.

All staff will be trained in incident reporting procedures during induction and through regular refresher training.

2.11 Staff Induction and Training

Goulburn Options provides comprehensive induction and ongoing training to ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in maintaining participant safety and wellbeing.

The organisation will:

- Deliver a structured induction program to all new staff and volunteers before they commence work with participants, covering topics including duty of care, professional boundaries, risk management, cultural awareness, and responding to abuse or neglect;
- Provide role-specific training relevant to the participant group being supported, including Positive Behaviour Support, safe medication practices, and safe transport;
- Require staff to complete refresher training at regular intervals and in response to emerging issues or changes to policy and legislation;
- Maintain accurate training records for all staff and volunteers and ensure all mandatory training is current;
- Foster a learning culture where continuous improvement and reflective practice are embedded into service delivery.

Training programs are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain relevant, evidence-based, and responsive to the needs of participants and the workforce.

Section 3: Roles

Role	Responsibilities and Accountabilities
Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure governance frameworks uphold participant safety and wellbeing. • Oversee risk management and compliance processes. • Maintain organisational risk register
Organisational Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement and monitor policies related to participant safety. • Ensure staff and volunteers comply with screening, training, and safety guidelines. • Review and report incidents.
Team Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct risk assessments with participants. • Ensure staff are trained and supported in risk management and incident reporting. • Oversee harm minimisation strategies.
Workforce (Admin, DSW, Students, Volunteers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to duty of care and safety protocols. • Participate in training and induction programs. • Follow risk management plans and incident reporting procedures. • Ensure participant safety.
Participants/Support Persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with staff in risk assessments and safety measures. • Provide input into risk management and harm minimization plans. • Report any concerns related to safety and wellbeing.

Section 4: Related Documentation

Document Name	Document Type
Code of Conduct	Policy
Routine Health and Safety Procedures	Policy
Training and Development	Policy
Protecting and Promoting Human Rights	Policy
In Home Risk Assessment	Form
Complaints and Feedback	Policy
Incident Management and Reportable Incidents	Policy
Incident Register	Register
Complaints Register	Register
Participant Handbook	Handbook
Employee Handbook	Handbook
Staff Induction Checklist	Form
Participant Induction Checklist	Form
Support Plan	Form
Risk Assessment	Form
Risk Register	Register
Hazard Register	Register
Child Safety and Wellbeing	Policy
Participant Service Charter	Charter

Section 5: Definitions

Term	Definition
Duty of Care	The legal obligation to ensure the safety and wellbeing of participants while in the care of the organisation.
Risk Management	The process of identifying, assessing, and controlling risks to participant safety and wellbeing.
Harm Minimisation	Strategies designed to reduce the risk of harm to participants in situations where risks cannot be fully eliminated.
Cultural Safety	An environment that is spiritually, socially, emotionally, and physically safe for people, where there is no challenge or denial of their identity, needs, or experience. Cultural safety recognises and respects diverse cultural identities and ensures individuals feel valued and supported.
Positive Behaviour Support	A person-centred approach to supporting people who display behaviours of concern. PBS focuses on understanding the reasons behind behaviours and implementing strategies to enhance quality of life and reduce the need for restrictive practices.
Restrictive Practice	Any practice or intervention that has the effect of restricting the rights or freedom of movement of a person with a disability, including physical, mechanical, or chemical restraints, and seclusion. Must be approved under a behaviour support plan where required.
Reportable Incident	An incident involving a participant that must be reported to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. Includes death, serious injury, abuse or neglect, unauthorised restrictive practices, and missing persons.
Informed Consent	The voluntary agreement to a proposed action, decision, or plan of support made with full understanding of the relevant information and without coercion.

Date of Last Review:	May 2025	Date of Next Review:	May 2027
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