National Institute of Construction Skills

Reporting and responding to harm

Purpose

NICS is committed to being a Child Safe Organisation and maintaining safe, inclusive, supporting and respectful learning environments where children and young people are protected from harm.

This policy outlines how workers identify and respond to harm or risk of harm to children.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- *The Board of Directors*
- *Chief Executive Officer (CEO)*
- *Executive Management*
- *Compliance & Academic Governance*
- *Trainers, assessors, administration staff, contractors*

All corporate, academic, funding, safety, data and financial operations of NICS

Definitions

- **Child:** Any individual under 18 years of age.
- **Child harm or abuse:** Refers to any action, behaviour, or treatment that causes or is likely to cause physical or emotional harm to a child or young person. This includes physical and emotional harm including bullying, and cyberbullying, sexual abuse, accidental injury, neglect, and exposure to family violence.
- **Cultural Safety:** Practices that respect and uphold the cultural identity of children, particularly First Nations children.

Training

NICS will provide training resources and support to all workers.

Identifying harm / risk of harm

Harm is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing.

There are 4 types of child abuse:

- physical
- sexual
- emotional
- neglect

Child abuse can be a single incident or several incidents that take place over time.

Physical abuse	Physical abuse happens when a child has been hurt or injured, and it is not an accident. Physical abuse does not always leave visible marks or injuries. It can include: hitting; shaking; choking; smothering; throwing; burning; biting; poisoning; using physical restraints.
Sexual abuse	Child sexual abuse happens when an adult, teenager or child uses their power or authority to involve another child in sexual activity. A *child sexual offence* is an offence of a sexual nature committed against a child and includes: • indecent treatment of a child (which may include exposing a child to an indecent act or film) • engaging in penile intercourse with a child under 16 • rape • incest • grooming a child (or their parent or carer) • making child exploitation material • repeated sexual conduct with a child. https://www.qld.gov.au/community/getting-support-health-social-issue/support-victims-abuse/child-abuse/child-sexual-abuse
Emotional abuse	Emotional abuse happens when a child is treated in a way that negatively impacts their social, emotional or intellectual development. Emotional abuse can be caused by: • rejection • name calling, teasing or bullying. • yelling • criticism • isolation or locking a child up for extended periods. • exposure to domestic and family violence. Experiencing domestic and family violence can also lead to emotional harm.
Neglect	Neglect happens when a child's basic needs are not met, affecting their health and development. Basic needs include: • food • housing and clean living conditions • health care • adequate clothing • personal hygiene • adequate supervision.

https://www.qld.gov.au/community/getting-support-health-social-issue/support-victims-abuse/child-abuse/what-is-child-abuse/child-abuse-types

Reporting

Workers are to Phone Triple Zero (000) if it's an emergency or if they believe a child is in immediate danger or in a life-threatening situation.

If any worker has a reason to suspect a child in Queensland is experiencing harm, is at risk of experiencing harm or being neglected they are to notify NICS management, who will support them to contact the relevant Child Safety Service Centre and talk to someone about their concerns.

NICS management / workers may also engage the support of the NICS Social Worker when responding to child safety concerns.

Queensland Child Safety Service Centres are contactable on:

- During normal business hours - contact the Regional Intake Service.
- After hours and on weekends - contact the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on 1800 177 135. The service operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

When making a report about child safety concerns, you will be asked to provide information that can help officers decide how best to respond. It is still vital you call even if you don't have all the information.

The information includes:

- details about the child or young person (e.g. name, age, address)
- details about the parents or other relevant persons
- the reasons you suspect the child or young person may have experienced or is at risk of experiencing harm.
- whether or not the child, young person or family has support.
- the immediate risk to the child or young person
- contact details for the family.

https://www.qld.gov.au/community/getting-support-health-social-issue/support-victims-abuse/child-abuse/reporting-child-abuse

NICS management will be guided by Child Safety for any further actions.

Following a report to Child Safety we will support the child by:

- Where appropriate, referring the child or their family to other services.
- Where appropriate, continuing to provide a service to child and their family and monitor their circumstances.

We will document all information received regarding the report and store this securely in our secure document management system.

Reporting sexual offences against children

Under the *Child Protection Act 1999*, it is an offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1899* section 229BC (1)(a) for any adult not to report sexual offending against a child by another adult to police.

This means all adults have the responsibility to report sexual offences against children to police—unless they have a "reasonable excuse" not to.

For this law, a child means a person under 16 or a person under 18 with an "impairment of the mind"

More information can be found at https://www.qld.gov.au/law/crime-and-police/types-of-crime/sexual-offences-against-children/failure-to-report

Workers who have harmed or are suspected of harming a child

Refer to the below “Reportable Conduct”.

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Reportable conduct

What is the reportable conduct scheme

The Reportable Conduct Scheme requires reporting entities to identify, report and investigate allegations or convictions of child abuse or child-related misconduct made about their workers. It requires reporting entities to take all concerns seriously and respond appropriately.

NICS as an RTO is a reporting entity under the scheme.

What is reportable conduct

- a child sexual offence
- sexual misconduct committed in relation to, or in the presence of, a child.
- ill-treatment of a child
- significant neglect of a child
- physical violence committed in relation to, or in the presence of, a child.
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.

Importantly, reportable conduct may be one act or a series of acts.

Reportable conduct does not need to have occurred during the course of the worker performing work for the reporting entity. For example, it may occur while the worker is off duty or out of hours.

Obligation to report

Allegations or convictions must be reported to the Commission if they meet the definition of reportable conduct. These are called reportable allegations and reportable convictions. All workers are responsible for reporting any allegations or convictions to the MPA CEO, who is responsible for reporting to the Commission.

Reportable allegations

A reportable allegation means an allegation or other information that leads a person to form a **reasonable belief** that a worker has committed reportable conduct or engaged in misconduct that may involve reportable conduct.

Types of reportable conduct

Child sexual offence	Sexual acts with a child under 16; grooming; indecent treatment; showing pornography; sending sexual messages.
Sexual misconduct-committed in relation to, or in the presence of a child	This can include sexualised comments, inappropriate touching, conversations with a child or young person that is sexualised in nature (i.e. has sexual undertones or sexual innuendo), watching a child undress (voyeurism), sexualised conversations or communications, boundary violations, or having inappropriate conversations with a child of a sexual nature or intention. It may be one-off or a pattern of behaviour.
Ill-treatment of a child	Excessive or degrading demands; pattern of hostile or degrading comments of behaviour; using inappropriate forms of behaviour management, verbally abusing a child.
Physical violence	Physical harm or force that causes or risks injury. Physical intimidation where a child or young person fears they will be harmed. While the Act specifies that this

	type of reportable conduct does not include trivial, negligible or insignificant physical force, it is important that this is considered in the overall context and circumstances of the situation
Behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm	Conduct that has serious and/or ongoing detrimental effects to a child's emotional or psychological wellbeing and/or development. Not every upset or short-term distress will qualify as reportable conduct. A reportable allegation of behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm is an allegation that a worker has engaged in conduct that may involve: • intentional or reckless conduct that is unreasonable (including a pattern of conduct) • a causal link to significant emotional or psychological harm to a child. This could include bullying or teasing a child repeatedly, forcing a child or young person to do something by scaring them, ignoring or rejecting a child, telling a child they are worthless or useless. It could include experiences by the child of racism, discrimination or racial vilification or harassment.
Significant neglect	See table 1

Reasonable belief

Taken from Queensland's Reportable Conduct Scheme guidelines:

What is a reasonable belief?

A reasonable belief does not mean it *needs* to be proven, only that a fair-minded and ordinary person, with the same information, would believe the conduct may have occurred. A reasonable belief exists when there is enough information that would lead a reasonable person to believe that the alleged conduct may have occurred. There is ***no requirement for certainty***, or for the allegation to be substantiated or investigated for a person to form a reasonable belief.

A reasonable belief is:

- based on facts and information, not suspicion, rumour or assumption
- formed after considering what is known at the time.
- enough to justify taking action, such as reporting, investigating, or putting risk controls in place.

A reasonable belief is not:

- certainty or proof
- a final conclusion or finding about what happened.
- the same as a substantiated finding.

How is a reasonable belief formed in practice?

When assessing whether a reasonable belief exists, a person may consider:

- the detail of the information received.
- the source of the information (for example, a direct disclosure), noting that an anonymous disclosure does not mean a reasonable belief cannot be formed.
- whether the information is plausible and credible
- any supporting information available at the time.

If the information is credible, it must be reported, even if you are unsure.

Who might provide information?

Allegations can come from anyone – children, families, workers or members of the public.

When receiving information from a child it is important they are listened too, believed, and know that their information will be acted on.

Workers are to advise MPA CEO or their delegate when they have received information. NICS management may also engage the NICS Social Worker to support workers, and those who have reported information.

When to report

When considering whether the threshold for reportable conduct is met, workers are encouraged to report matters to MPA CEO. This is important, as while individual behaviours may not meet the threshold for reporting a reportable allegation to the Commission, they may be indicative of a pattern of behaviour when considered in context with other allegations made by other people that would meet the threshold.

If a worker or MPA CEO is unsure about whether an allegation should be reported, they should seek advice from the Commission - https://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/contact-us

Who can an allegation be made about?

The Reportable Conduct Scheme applies to all NICS workers. The term 'worker' is broadly defined to capture individuals who perform work of any kind for the NICS, and includes:

- an employee
- a volunteer
- an approved carer and member of an approved carer's household under the Child Protection Act 1999, schedule 3
- a contractor, subcontractor or consultant
- an individual supplied by a provider of labour hire services.
- an executive officer or another person concerned with the reporting entity's management.
- a trainee or person undertaking work experience for the reporting entity.
- a minister of religion, religious leader or officer of a religious body
- an individual operating as a sole trader
- an honorary officer of the department administering the Child Protection Act 1999
- a former worker (see detail below).

This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other individuals who may be regarded as a 'worker'.

A worker includes someone who is under 18-years-of-age, if they are performing work for NICS.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme applies to all NICS workers, even when they work in roles that don't have contact with children. It applies regardless of whether the work is paid or unpaid, full-time, part-time, casual, or short-term, and whether it occurs on-site, off-site, or outside normal hours.

Former workers

This applies to former workers also if an allegation occurred while a worker was performing work for NICS.

Responsibilities of a worker

It is mandatory under The Act for any worker who becomes aware of a reportable allegation about, or a reportable conviction of, a NICS worker to report the matter as soon as possible to the MPA CEO.

Workers can also report directly to the Commission https://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/forms

Where an allegation involves the MPA CEO workers should notify the commission directly https://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/publication/form-3-reportable-conduct-individuals

The obligation to report does not apply if the worker reasonably believes that the matter has already been reported by another person.

All workers must adhere to the systems in place to prevent and respond to reportable conduct set by NICS.

Failure to report

Failure of a worker to report will result in disciplinary action.

Reporting requirements of the CEO

The MPA CEO has additional responsibilities under the Act and must report and respond to reportable conduct in accordance with https://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/childsafe/reportable-conduct-scheme/managing-reportable-conduct-matter

Table 1

Types of neglect	
Supervisory neglect the absence of appropriate supervision that poses a risk to the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, with regards to factors relating to the child.	• Leaving a child or young person alone or without supervision for extended periods dependent on lawful age. • Failure to supervise a child in an unsafe environment resulting in a risk of injury, or actual injury. • Exposing a child or young person to unsafe environments or hazards (such as leaving a fence open that leads to a busy road). • Not recognising the seriousness of an illness or injury and/or failing to obtain or follow medical treatment leading to their condition worsening. • Witnessing a child or young person being harmed (by either another child or worker) and failing to respond. • Failure to adequately supervise children in circumstances where foreseeable child-on-child harm occurs or is likely to occur (such as known conflict between children). • Not responding to signs of clear distress, escalation or dysregulation that require staff support.
Physical neglect Failure to meet a child's physical needs including the provision of adequate and appropriate food, clothing, shelter or physical hygiene needs.	• Deliberately does not provide adequate food, exposes a child to food they know they are allergic to or food that is not of appropriate nutritional value such that the child is hungry, malnourished or fails to thrive. • Clothing that is in a poor state of repair or inappropriate, such as shoes with holes, clothes soaked in urine that remain unwashed or clothing that is inappropriate to the season. • A child or young person being extremely dirty or suffering from a skin condition due to poor hygiene. • Not being provided with a toothbrush and toothpaste resulting in dental decay.
Educational neglect Failure to ensure that a child's formal educational needs are being met.	• Condoning or encouraging non-attendance. • Preventing a child from accessing required learning supports, including withholding required technology or equipment. • Deliberately withholding learning opportunities so that the child or young person becomes disengaged from learning and/or it impacts their academic performance.
Emotional neglect Failure to provide adequate nurturing, encouragement and support to a child.	• Belittling, mocking or calling a child names repeatedly. • Shaming, humiliating or demeaning a child or young person. • Isolating, rejecting or abandoning a child or young person. • Refusing to attend to a child's emotional needs such as continually ignoring them when they are upset and refusing to comfort them when distressed. • Allowing or encouraging a child to take part in criminal, sexually inappropriate or other harmful behaviour. • Racism, including denying a child's Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander identity or failing to support them to stay connected to their culture. • Discriminatory behaviour, for example related to disability, that excludes or fails to support a child or young person.

qfcc.qld.gov.au **Queensland's Reportable Conduct Scheme guideline** 15

Source: Guide to Queensland's Reportable Conduct Scheme guideline, p. 15

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Board of Directors	Strategic risk oversight, approval of risk framework
CEO	
Executive Management	
Compliance Officer	
WHS Officer	
Data & Reporting Officer	
All Staff	Identify harm / risk of harm and report immediately

National Institute of Construction Skills

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Authorship and Approval

Name	Position	Role	Action Date
Dayna Price	Social Worker / Support Mentor	Author	07/07/2026
Lauree Skene	RTO Compliance Co Ordinator	Reviewer	07/07/2026

Version History

Version No.	Action Date / Person	Summary of Revisions
One (1)	07/07/2026 L. Skene	Amendments to Document naming convention to align with additional resources being developed by Compliance Co Ordinator (Lauree) and NICS Social Worker (Dayna) in line with the Child Safety Standards, principles and upcoming Child Safe accreditation.
	07/07/2026 D. Price	Development of document content in line with the National Child Safety Standards and NICS ongoing Child Safety Accreditation recommendations.

Distribution List

Position	Name	Notes / Area
President	Chris Munday	All staff relevant staff will have access to all required documentation through the staff portal and on the NICS website.
General Manager (GM)	Todd Aitken	
Social Worker / Support Mentor	Dayna Price	
RTO Compliance Coordinator	Lauree Skene-Gordon	
Head Trainer	Ruby Harrison	
Marketing Coordinator	Saira Yasir	
Project Coordinator	Jo Kirley	
Administration Coordinator	Paige Reynolds	
Finance / HR Manager	Christina Osbourne	