
WILDLIFE UNLEASHED

CHILD SAFETY & WELLBEING POLICY

Effective: August 2026 | Review: August 2027

1. Purpose

Wildlife Unleashed is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, respectful and inclusive environment for all children and young people who participate in our wildlife education experiences.

This policy outlines our commitment to protecting children from harm and the practices we have in place to support the safety and wellbeing of children who interact with Wildlife Unleashed.

Wildlife Unleashed is committed to implementing Queensland's Child Safe Standards and the Universal Principle of cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Wildlife Unleashed owners and management, employees, contractors, volunteers and any other person acting on behalf of Wildlife Unleashed.

It applies wherever Wildlife Unleashed provides services involving children, including schools, early childhood services, vacation care programs, children's parties, community events, wildlife displays, workshops and other educational experiences.

3. Our Commitment to Child Safety

- prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and young people;
- does not tolerate child abuse, harm, neglect, exploitation or inappropriate behaviour;
- takes concerns about children's safety seriously;
- encourages children to speak up and have their views heard;
- respects the individual needs, backgrounds and abilities of children;
- promotes culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people;
- maintains appropriate professional boundaries between workers, volunteers and children;
- takes reasonable steps to identify and minimise risks to children; and
- continually reviews and improves our child safe practices.

4. Children's Participation and Voice

Children have the right to feel safe, be treated with respect and have their concerns taken seriously.

When appropriate to their age and ability, Wildlife Unleashed encourages children to ask questions, communicate when they are uncomfortable or do not want to participate, choose whether they wish to participate in optional animal interactions, provide feedback about their experience and raise concerns with a Wildlife Unleashed team member or another trusted adult.

A child will never be pressured to touch, hold or interact with an animal if they do not wish to do so.

5. Families, Schools and Organisations

Wildlife Unleashed recognises the important role that parents, carers, teachers and other responsible adults play in children's safety.

We communicate relevant safety requirements before and during our wildlife experiences and encourage families and organisations to raise questions or concerns.

Unless specifically agreed otherwise, children attending Wildlife Unleashed experiences remain under the supervision of their parent, guardian, teacher, educator or other responsible adult from the organisation hosting the activity.

6. Equity, Inclusion and Cultural Safety

Wildlife Unleashed aims to provide experiences where every child feels welcome, respected and included regardless of their background, culture, language, gender, ability or individual needs.

We recognise and respect the cultural identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and are committed to creating environments where they feel safe, valued, included and respected.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered where possible to allow children with disability or additional needs to participate safely and meaningfully in our experiences.

Discrimination, bullying, harassment and culturally unsafe behaviour are not tolerated.

7. Staff and Volunteers

Wildlife Unleashed takes reasonable steps to ensure people working with children are suitable for their roles.

Where required, workers and volunteers must hold appropriate Working with Children clearances, including Queensland Blue Cards.

Child safety responsibilities form part of staff and volunteer induction, training and ongoing expectations.

All workers and volunteers must comply with Wildlife Unleashed's Child Safe Code of Conduct and understand their responsibility to identify and report child safety concerns.

8. Appropriate Behaviour and Professional Boundaries

Wildlife Unleashed workers and volunteers must maintain appropriate professional boundaries with children.

- treat children with dignity and respect;
- use appropriate language and behaviour;
- listen to children and take concerns seriously;
- avoid unnecessary one-to-one situations with children where practicable;
- only use physical contact when appropriate, necessary and reasonable;
- never engage in sexualised, abusive, intimidating, humiliating or discriminatory behaviour;
- never develop inappropriate personal relationships with children;
- never communicate privately with a child through personal social media or messaging services unless appropriately authorised and necessary for legitimate organisational purposes; and
- report behaviour or circumstances that may place a child at risk.

9. Physical Safety and Wildlife Experiences

Wildlife Unleashed recognises that our activities involve animals and therefore require additional risk management.

Animal interactions are planned and supervised according to the species involved, the environment, the age and abilities of participants and Wildlife Unleashed's animal handling and safety procedures.

Children are provided with appropriate instructions before interacting with animals.

Wildlife Unleashed workers may stop or modify an interaction at any time where they believe continuing could create an unacceptable risk to a child, animal or other participant.

Our existing workplace, animal handling and event risk management procedures operate alongside this Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy.

10. Photography, Video and Online Environments

Wildlife Unleashed respects children's privacy when photographs or videos are taken during our activities.

Images of children will only be captured or used by Wildlife Unleashed where appropriate permission or consent has been obtained.

Workers and volunteers must not use personal devices to photograph or record children for personal purposes.

Any Wildlife Unleashed online communication involving children must be appropriate, professional and connected to a legitimate business or educational purpose.

11. Complaints, Concerns and Disclosures

Wildlife Unleashed encourages children, parents, carers, schools, organisations, staff and volunteers to raise any concern relating to the safety or wellbeing of a child.

Concerns will be taken seriously, handled respectfully and sensitively, responded to as promptly as reasonably possible, documented appropriately and escalated or reported to relevant authorities where required by law.

If a child discloses that they have been harmed or feel unsafe, Wildlife Unleashed workers must listen calmly, take the child seriously, avoid making promises about secrecy and report the concern in accordance with Wildlife Unleashed's Child Safety Complaints & Reporting Procedure.

No person will be disadvantaged for raising a genuine child safety concern.

12. Responding to Immediate Risk

Where there is an immediate risk to a child's safety, Wildlife Unleashed will prioritise protecting the child from further harm and seek assistance from the appropriate emergency or child protection authority where necessary.

Workers must not attempt to conduct their own investigation into suspected abuse or serious harm beyond gathering the information reasonably necessary to respond and report the concern.

13. Risk Management

Wildlife Unleashed identifies and manages risks to children across its activities and operating environments.

Child safety risks may include interactions between adults and children, animal interactions, physical event environments, one-to-one interactions, photography and digital communications, transport or travel where applicable, inappropriate behaviour by another child or adult, and circumstances that may create additional vulnerability for particular children.

Controls are implemented according to the nature and level of identified risk.

14. Information, Privacy and Record Keeping

Information relating to child safety concerns will be handled sensitively and only shared with people who have a legitimate need to know or where disclosure is required or permitted by law.

Wildlife Unleashed maintains appropriate records relating to serious child safety concerns, complaints, incidents and actions taken.

15. Breaches of This Policy

Any suspected breach of this policy or the Child Safe Code of Conduct will be taken seriously.

Depending on the circumstances, Wildlife Unleashed may take action including additional training, removal from child-related duties, disciplinary action, termination of employment or engagement, or referral to relevant authorities.

16. Training and Awareness

Wildlife Unleashed ensures workers and volunteers receive information appropriate to their role about child safety responsibilities, appropriate behaviour and professional boundaries, identifying potential signs or risks of harm, responding to disclosures and concerns, reporting requirements, and Wildlife Unleashed's child safety policies and procedures.

17. Continuous Improvement

Wildlife Unleashed is committed to continually improving its child safe practices.

This policy and related procedures will be reviewed regularly and following significant child safety incidents, legislative changes or identified opportunities for improvement.

Feedback from children, families, staff, volunteers and organisations we work with may also be considered when reviewing our child safe practices.

18. Related Documents

This policy should be read together with Wildlife Unleashed's Commitment to Child Safety & Wellbeing, Child Safe Code of Conduct, Child Safety Complaints & Reporting Procedure, relevant risk assessments and safety procedures, and staff and volunteer policies and procedures.

19. Contact Us

Questions, feedback or concerns relating to child safety at Wildlife Unleashed can be raised through the contact details provided on the Wildlife Unleashed website.

All child safety concerns will be treated seriously and handled in accordance with this policy and applicable Queensland law.

Approved by: Wildlife Unleashed Management

Effective: August 2026 **Next Review:** August 2027