

ACU Safeguarding Children Capability Framework

The ACU Safeguarding Children Capability Framework, developed in 2017, informs all courses, programs, services and information provided by ACU.

The Framework draws on research by the ACU Institute of Child Protection Studies and the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, along **with government standards, such as the Victorian Government's Child-Safe Standards**, which apply to all organisations providing services to children and young people up to the age of 18.

In order to effectively develop approaches to child safety that reflect the nature of their work, organisational leaders and professionals must develop the relevant capabilities to undertake appropriate risk assessment, be equipped to identify and examine the issues, and tailor organisational responses. To facilitate this, ACU identified the capabilities that adults need to have, in order to implement child-safe organisational standards.

The Framework includes the following six capabilities:

1. Nature of abuse and risk factors
2. Child-safe organisational cultures and governance
3. Risk-management strategies
4. Participation of children and young people
5. Education and prevention
6. Responsive care and support

1. Nature of abuse and risk factors

Understands the nature of sexual abuse and other types of abuse experienced by children and young people, and factors that influence the risk of abuse occurring.

- 1.1 Knows the nature and causes of sexual abuse and other types of abuse that are experienced by children and young people within institutions/organisations.
- 1.2 Knows the risk and protective factors associated with children and young people.
- 1.3 Knows the risk inherent in their particular institutional/organisational context.

2. Child-safe organisational cultures and governance

Fosters child-safe organisational cultures and environments through leadership, governance and practice.

- 2.1 Knows what enables and encourages child-safe institutional/organisational cultures and environments and approaches that promote them.
- 2.2 Knows what child-safe practices are effective in their institutional/organisational context.
- 2.3 Addresses the attitudes, beliefs and values of staff and communities about children and young people, sexual abuse and other types of abuse to support child-safe behaviours.
- 2.4 Develops and implements a comprehensive child-safe governance framework that includes policies, code of conduct, human resource procedures and clear accountabilities for staff.
- 2.5 Applies legal, ethical and professional responsibilities relating to children's safety.
- 2.6 Engages families and communities in culturally appropriate ways.

3. Risk management strategies

Develops and implements effective strategies that address risks, based on the situational prevention model, and take appropriate action when concerns and issues arise.

- 3.1 Knows what strategies are effective and how to apply policies and strategies in their institutional/organisational context.
- 3.2 Develops, implements and reviews appropriate child-safe policies, procedures and practices.
- 3.3 Knows how to define appropriate behaviours and boundaries between adults and children and young people; why boundaries are important and how best to respond if adults violate these.
- 3.4 Knows and addresses the responsibilities and limitations of mandatory screening and reporting schemes.
- 3.5 Implements effective human resource procedures to protect children and young people, including appropriate values-based screening and pre-employment strategies; ongoing professional development, supervision, monitoring and mentoring of staff and volunteers; and clear accountabilities.

4. Participation of children and young people

Facilitates **children and young people's engagement in child**-centred participatory processes, including those that enable and respond to disclosures and complaints.

- 4.1 Demonstrates an understanding of child and adolescent development, and the needs of different groups of children and young people, and applies them in their participatory processes.
- 4.2 Involves children and young people and includes their perspectives in addressing and preventing risk and promoting protective factors in institutions/organisations.
- 4.3 Knows and utilises the resources available to help adults ask for—and respond to—the views of children and young people about safety within institutions/organisations.

5. Education and prevention

Applies sex education and sexual abuse prevention models to address the safety needs of children and young people.

- 5.1 Knows about typical sexual development of children and adolescents.
- 5.2 Demonstrates skills in being able to talk in developmentally appropriate and safe ways with young people about sexuality, relationships, safety, and help-seeking.
- 5.3 Addresses the cultural safety associated with particular groups of children and young people including those who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, who are from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and the safety of those with disability.
- 5.4 Knows the learning needs of children and young people to prevent, manage and seek help when exposed to risks of harm.
- 5.5 Applies models within their organisation, and embeds skill development and accountabilities within their institutional/organisational processes for ensuring the sex/relationship education needs of children and young people are met (e.g., supervision of staff and volunteers).

6. Responsive care and support

Responds appropriately to the ongoing needs of children and young people who have experienced abuse and manages the impact of this abuse on other children and young people, staff, families, and the institution/organisation.

- 6.1 Knows the resources available to help adults ask for—and respond to—the views of children and young people about safety within organisations.
- 6.2 Knows and demonstrates an appreciation of the impacts of abuse on children and young people, and the vicarious impacts for other children, families, staff and the institution/organisation.
- 6.3 Knows and can demonstrate appropriate responses in instances of child abuse (both within and outside the institution/organisation), including mandatory reporting, the development of safety plans and providing appropriate support to victims, other children, families, staff and the institution/organisation.

Measuring change

To know whether organisations are improving in their journey of creating conditions of safety for children and young people, they need support with measuring change. A unique aspect of *ACU Safeguarding Children and Young People* is the survey facility to help users assess their practice, measure changes as a result of implementation of safeguarding strategies, and potentially to compare their organisation with other like-organisations. It will include a dashboard-style facility for collection, and visualisation of results of surveys by organisations about conditions of safety – including the views of young people, staff, volunteers, parents and organisational leaders. This would provide a snapshot to enable end-users to benchmark within their sector, and to monitor change over time.

If your organisation would like more information about participating in the survey, visit safeguardingchildren.acu.edu.au for more information.