

Child Protection: general reporting protocol

1.0 Statement of Principles / Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- The safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who access CSS services;
- That CSS is compliant with relevant Nauruan legislation, and in particular the *United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child*;
- The obligations of CSS staff to report and respond to concerns regarding a child's safety or welfare are well articulated.

2.0 Statement of Commitment and Policy Statement

2.1 Statement of Commitment

CSS is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who access its services and/or premises. CSS aims to provide a safe, welcoming and friendly environment for children and young people.

CSS staff will treat children and young people with dignity, respect and understanding at all times, regardless of differences of ethnicity, religion, age, ability, gender, sexual orientation and economic circumstances.

2.2 Policy Statement

CSS works in a cross cultural environment with people from a wide range of cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds and acknowledges that the understanding of what constitutes 'safety' and 'wellbeing' in relation to children and young people may differ according to the values, norms and experiences of each community. CSS will respect different religious norms and values but acknowledges that the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is paramount.

CSS will work actively to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people within the communities with which it works through providing information, education, and support. CSS will also work to create a better understanding of cultural differences in organizations and agencies concerned with the safety and wellbeing of children through information sharing and collaboration, as appropriate. CSS will work actively to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people within the communities with which it works through providing information, education, and support. In instances where CSS has provided information/support to external agencies all such data will be clearly recorded in the relevant family/child case notes for evidence based practice and follow up where required.

In the course of their work, CSS staff and Board of Management members will strive to provide positive role models to children and young people and will conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their position as a representative of CSS.

3.0 Scope

The reporting obligations created by this policy are complementary with, and inclusive of, both the Government of Nauru's expectations with regard to reporting critical incidents involving Unaccompanied Refugee Minors for whom CSS has delegated guardianship responsibilities, and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) Incident Reporting Protocol, which is relevant to all clients.

The reporting obligations specified by this policy exceed the aforementioned requirements and create a specific protocol to manage concerns about a child's safety and welfare.

4.0 Authorities, Responsibilities and Delegations
The **Client Services Manager** is responsible for review, currency and effectiveness in reference to this procedure and associated guidelines, forms and attachments.

6.0 Definitions

- **Child** or **minor** refers to any person less than 18 years of age.
- **Harm** refers to any detrimental effect of a significant nature caused on a child’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm may be caused by physical or emotional abuse, neglect and/or sexual abuse or exploitation.
- **Suspicion of harm** can arise when staff are:
 - Informed by a child that they, or a child that they know, has been harmed.
 - Informed by an adult that harm has occurred or is likely to occur.
 - Concerned about significant changes in the behavior of a child.
 - Notice new, unexplained and/or suspicious injuries to a child.
 - Witness harm to a child occurring.

7.0 Policy Detail or Procedure Detail

- Any and all disclosures of harm, or potential harm, to a child will be treated seriously.
- Principles of natural justice will apply to all parties involved in an incident.
- When a suspicion of harm pertains to a CSS client, records will be kept on the CS-Net client record database.
- When a suspicion of harm arises, relevant staff in consultation with line management will assess the immediate wellbeing of the child and act to ameliorate any immediate risk.
- Following taking action to address the immediate safety of a child, CSS staff will conduct a risk assessment
- CSS staff will notify Nauru Child Protection Unit where risk of harm is identified, and work collaboratively with CPU in cases where CPU confirms their ongoing engagement
- CSS will provide ongoing support to the child in a way that minimizes future exposure to harm.
- When relevant CSS will offer support and education to parents, family and other community members.
- CSS to provide input to the development of a Nauru Child Protection Framework in collaboration with Nauru CPU. CSS to incorporate the Nauru Child Protection Framework, once developed, into its policies around, and responses to Child Protection issues.

8.0 Records

Records of suspicion of harm and any subsequent action undertaken must be kept on client records on CS-Net database.

9.0 Applicable Regulations

The Practice guide: the assessment of harm and risk of harm (2013) produced by the Queensland Government will be used in conjunction with this policy to guide the assessment of child safety by CSS staff. This document provides additional definitions of terminology relevant to this policy. It also provides prompts for each stage of the policy procedure.

10.0 Summary of Documents

Procedures	CSS Child Protection Procedure
Guidelines	DIBP Nauru Settlement Incident Reporting Protocol – Service Providers (February 2016)
Forms	Detailed Incident Report
Other Related Topics	Critical incidents reporting