

ST JOHN AMBULANCE (NSW)

OCTOBER, 2018

# CHILD SAFETY POLICY



# ST JOHN NSW VALUES

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Our values define who we are. They guide our actions and behaviour. They influence the way we work with each other, our customers and communities.



## RESPECT

We are ambassadors for St John. We are respected for the work that we do and the way that we do it. We recognise our strength comes from our diversity. We have the courage to be authentic and true.



## INTEGRITY

We do the right thing. We are honest and trustworthy. We are accountable for our actions and take ownership of our shared goals. We are there when you need us. You can depend on us.



## LEADERSHIP

We are the custodians of our future. We enable our teams to grow and succeed. We lead by example and learn from our mistakes. Our passion and commitment engage and inspire.



## COMMUNICATION

We are sincere in our voice and actions. We share ideas and listen to each other, our customers and community. We are open and transparent in all that we do.



## COLLABORATION

We work best when we work together. We care for our colleagues and our community. We take initiative, generate new ideas and embrace change. We share success. Together we can make a difference.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1. Statement of Commitment

St John NSW is a child safe organisation. We have a zero tolerance policy towards all forms of child abuse and neglect. This policy provides a message that everybody has a responsibility to provide a safe environment to children and young people.

St John NSW cares about keeping children and young people safe. Protecting and promoting the emotional, physical, cultural, sexual and spiritual wellbeing of children and young people is central to all aspects of the operations and culture of St John NSW. St John NSW commits to creating and maintaining an environment where members act in the best interest of children and young people and has zero tolerance to any form of abuse.

St John NSW:

- Recognises that children and young people have rights as individuals and should be treated with dignity and respect;
- Believes that children and young people have the right to be emotionally and physically safe at all times;
- Takes all reasonable precautions to protect children and young people in its care from harm of every kind;
- Empowers and enables members to actively contribute to building a culture of child safety;
- Makes all adult members aware of their child safety responsibilities;
- Cooperates with all relevant authorities including Family and Children Services and the Police.

St John NSW is constantly striving:

- to promote a safe environment for all children and young people
- to assist members to recognise when a child or young person is at risk of any harm
- to follow the appropriate notification procedures when reporting risk of any harm.





# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## 1.2. Responsibilities

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Commissioner and GM PPC hold responsibility for implementation and review of Child Safety Policy and practices.

Designated, trained Child Wellbeing Officers hold responsibility for providing first line support and guidance to all members with respect to child safety.

All members are responsible for:

- Following the Child Safety Policy of St John NSW;
- Protecting children and young person from all forms of harm, abuse, bullying and exploitation;
- Creating and maintaining a safe culture for children and young people;
- Report concerns relating to the safety and welfare of children and young people to a Child Wellbeing Officer.

## 1.3. Definitions

An **adult member** is a volunteer or staff member of St John NSW aged 18 years and over.

**Child and young person** refers to any person (both members of St John NSW and members of the public) up to 18 years of age. This would include, but not limited to bystanders and patients.

**Child Abuse** involves conduct by any person, which puts children and young persons at risk of any harm. It can take many forms, including verbal and physical actions and failure to provide basic care. Members are required to take all reasonable measures to avoid placing children and young people at risk of harm and/or creating opportunities for allegations or misunderstandings.

See Appendix 1 for key definitions.

**Child Wellbeing Officer** provides child safety leadership and support to protect all children and young people in every part of St John NSW.

**Commissioner** refers to St John NSW Commissioner.

**Immediate risk** – is defined as to what extent, any child is in immediate danger of serious harm, determine whether immediate interventions should be initiated or maintained to provide appropriate protection for the child. A child may be assessed as in need of immediate intervention if the level of risk is identified as likely (probable), not just possible (may occur); the probability of harm will have a significant detrimental effect on the child if intervention does not occur; and there is not a parent able and willing to protect to protect the child from future significant harm.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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**Lead Child Wellbeing Officer** provides child safety leadership to Child Wellbeing Officers and manages and reports child safety issues to the CEO, Commissioner and relevant authorities.

**Reportable Conduct** is defined as any sexual offence, or sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including a child pornography offence or an offence involving child abuse material), or any assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child or any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child, whether or not, in any case, with the consent of the child.

## 2. YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND GUIDELINES

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### 2.1. Rights of Children and Young People

St John NSW acknowledges the significant power imbalance that exists between children and young people and adults and as such is committed to listening to children and young people, empowering them by taking their views and opinions seriously and responding appropriately to any concerns they raise with adult members.

St John NSW is committed to ensuring that children and young people engaged with our organisation understand they have the right to:

- feel safe
- be listened to
- be involved in decisions that affect them
- have their cultural values respected
- not be unjustly discriminated against based on their religion or beliefs
- have their opinions or beliefs or their interests considered
- raise a concern or make a complaint if they feel they have not been treated in accordance with this policy
- receive education on personal safety and protective behaviours; and
- have their best interests considered.

### 2.2. Expectations of Children and Young People

Children and young people should:

- show respect for other children and young people and adult members
- treat others with honesty, caring, respect and kindness
- listen to others
- be made aware of safety requirements including those relating to child safety
- tell a responsible adult member, parent/guardian if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable in any situation so they can help
- tell a responsible adult member, parent/guardian if they are unhappy with the way they are being treated
- participate fairly and allow the same of others
- report inappropriate behaviour, unsafe situations or harm
- abide by the Behaviour Code.



## 2. YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND GUIDELINES

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### 2.3. Practices for Dealing with Children and Young People

Care must be taken when working or engaging with children and young people.

Adult Members should:

- try to initiate communication to children and young people with a smile and give clear instructions using age appropriate language;
- speak slowly using a friendly tone and avoid shouting;
- when speaking with a child or young person get down to their level so that they are face to face with them;
- explain why they are asking a child or young person to do something;
- never use physical contact to overcome a child or young person's resistance to a request;
- try to stay within sight of other adults at all times, do not place themselves in a situation where they are alone with a child or young person, including travel to and from St John NSW activities;
- avoid touching a child or young person unless it is essential for them to:
  - provide assistance in the event that a child or young person is injured;
  - reassure or calm a distressed child or young person;
  - intervene to ensure the safety of a child or young person.

If an adult member needs to touch a child or young person as part of providing first aid, reassurance or safety concern, they should:

- only touch the child or young person 'neutral' areas of their body such as the arm or shoulder;
- avoid unobserved contact with a child or young person where possible; and
- if ongoing first aid or reassurance is required seek assistance from another adult.



## 3. REPORTING

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### 3.1. Reporting Principles

Child safety concerns may arise in a variety of ways, through direct disclosure, observation or information received from others. All members must remain open and aware to the various ways abuse and neglect concerns may arise.

Child abuse and/or neglect may occur at St John NSW events and meetings, however may also occur away from St John NSW events and meetings.

It is vital that all members adhere to the process for internally reporting concerns without delay. If there is immediate risk of harm to the child and young person, report this matter to the police immediately. Thereafter they notify the Lead Wellbeing Officer as soon as possible.

Members will ensure that where concerns arise, confidentiality is maintained as far as possible.

St John NSW will protect any person disclosing or supplying information in good faith.

Following the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the NSW Government has introduced a “failure to protect” and “failure to report” criminal offence.

The NSW “failure to protect” offence applies where an adult:

- knows there is a risk that another adult associated with the organisation will commit a sexual offence, serious physical abuse or serious neglect offence against a child;
- has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, and
- negligently fails to reduce or remove the risk.

The “failure to report” offence applies where any adult knows, believes or should reasonably know that a child has been sexually or physically abused and fails to report that to Police. This legislation applies to all adults in NSW.



Reportable conduct includes:

- any sexual offence or sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child including a child pornography offence
- any assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child
- any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child – even if the child consented to the behaviour.

St John Ambulance NSW is legally required to report to the NSW Ombudsman's office any incidences where a staff member or volunteer engages in or has engaged in any of the above conduct. If any member believes that a staff member or volunteer has committed the above conduct they must report to the Child Wellbeing Officer and/or the Lead Child Wellbeing Officer.



## 3. REPORTING

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### 3.2. Reporting & Complaints Process

All members including mandatory reporters must immediately report any suspected, known or disclosed instances of child safety abuse or concerns to a Child Wellbeing Officer who is responsible for reporting the matter to the Lead Wellbeing Officer. This includes concern for a child or young person when they attend St John NSW events.

Reassure the child or young person or person reporting that this is being taken seriously. If appropriate talk to the person reporting the incident about what will happen.

Incident reports are required for all child safety concerns. The report should outline details of the child and young person safety breach or allegation of improper conduct, the time and place it occurred, the name of any witness and a full description of what has occurred.

The Lead Child Wellbeing Officer is responsible for managing and investigating the concerns promptly and appropriately. The Lead Child Wellbeing Officer reports concerns to the CEO and Commissioner.

#### **If a member has a concern:**

- If there is immediate risk of harm, contact the Police immediately;
- The Child Wellbeing Officer reports to the Lead Child Wellbeing Officer as soon as possible;
- The Lead Child Wellbeing Officer reports concerns to CEO and Commissioner and investigates the matter;
- Recommendation are made to the CEO and/or Commissioner on the member's membership status (ie suspended pending investigation);
- If the Lead Child Wellbeing Officer determines reportable conduct may have occurred, the Lead Child Wellbeing Officer makes a report to the NSW Ombudsman or Child Protection Helpline as soon as practicable and to the Police within 12 hours (if child or young person is not in any immediate risk);
- Where appropriate the Lead Child Wellbeing Officer manages the investigation with the Police (if the Police are involved);
- Upon completion of the investigation the Lead Child Wellbeing Officer manages the outcome.

*See Appendix B and D for Reporting & Complaints Handling Template and Flowchart.*

## 3. REPORTING

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### 3.3. Child Wellbeing Officers

Child Wellbeing Officers	Position	Contact
Lead Child Wellbeing Officer	General Manager People, Performance & Culture	0432 750 968 ** Available 7 days a week
Child Wellbeing Officer	Health, Safety & Incident Partner	0457 334 003 ** Available 7 days a week
Child Wellbeing Officer	People & Culture Partner	0428 035 506 ** Available 7 days a week



## 4. RECRUITMENT, SCREENING AND TRAINING

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Our commitment to child safety will be evident at every stage of engagement with prospective and new members. St John NSW is committed to ensuring all members uphold the values of our organisation and the principles of this policy.

### 4.1. Recruitment and Screening

All advertisements for new positions at St John NSW will feature the organisation's commitment to child safety and the requirement to have or obtain a Working with Children Check.

St John NSW will ensure that all job applications, position descriptions and employment agreements will include the following commitment to child safety:

*“St John NSW is a child safe organisation. We have a zero tolerance policy toward all forms of child abuse and neglect.”*

### 4.2. Training and Supporting Members

St John NSW is committed to providing training and induction to new members.

St John NSW is committed to providing ongoing child safety training to all existing members.

All Child Wellbeing Officers will undergo the “Speak up: Identifying and responding to child abuse” training program.



## 5. RISK MANAGEMENT & DOCUMENTATION

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St John NSW is committed to taking the management of child safety seriously. St John NSW works closely with members to identify and mitigate risks to child safety.

In circumstances where a serious child safety incident has occurred or been reported the GM PPC and the Health & Safety Partner will ensure this is comprehensively reviewed and any learning arising is utilised to strengthen risk management approaches.

The GM PPC and the Health & Safety Partner will maintain records of all child safety incident notifications, including child protection reports to Family and Community Services, NSW Ombudsman and the Police.

The Lead Child Wellbeing Officer is responsible for ensuring that the Child Protection Register will be maintained and updated.



## 6. STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS: WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

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St John NSW requires all members to hold a current Working with Children Check in accordance with the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW). St John NSW will maintain the validity and currency of the Working with Child Check.

St John NSW is committed to fulfilling requirements under the act and further information about Working with Children Check and child related employment can be found at [www.kids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au)

Members who's Working with Children Check is cancelled or not renewed will be unable to continue working or volunteering with St John NSW until such time as their Working with Children Check is current.

## 7. REVIEW PROCESSES

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The Lead Child Wellbeing Officer will review the policy every 2 years in consultation with the CEO and Commissioner.



## 8. LEGISLATION & RELATED DOCUMENTS

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The St John NSW Child Safety Policy is also consistent with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

This policy is intended to ensure compliance of St John NSW and its members with The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 and other relevant legislation.

- Recognises that children and young people have rights as individuals and should be treated with dignity and respect;
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Commission for Children and Young Persons Act 1998
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
- Child Protection (prohibited employment) Act 1998
- Ombudsman Act 1974
- Anti-Discrimination Act (1991)
- Privacy Act (1988)
- National Child and Vulnerable Persons' Safety Standards
- National Office Child and Vulnerable Persons' Safety Procedures
- CRC and WWCC information sheet
- Health and Safety Policy
- Our Values & Behaviour Statement



## 9. APPENDICES

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### 9.1 Appendix A Key Definitions

In order to create a child safe environment, it is important for members to understand the various ways in which abuse of children and young people can occur. The following section defines the various forms of abuse and harm.

**Cumulative Harm** – involves repeated and ongoing abuse and/or neglect which detrimentally impacts a child's development and well-being.

**Emotional Abuse** - can result in damage to the child's physical, social, intellectual or emotional development. This may involve being repeatedly rejected, name-called or put down. It may involve being frightened by threats or subjected to continual coldness so that self-esteem, physical, intellectual and emotional growth are affected.

**Family Violence** – Witnessing family violence is a specific form of emotional or psychological abuse. Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of family in a child or young person's life. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their well-being and development.

**Grooming** – The offence of grooming concerns predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. The offence applies where an adult communicates by word or conduct with a child under the age of 16 years or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating a child's involvement in sexual conduct, either with the groomer or another adult. Grooming does not necessarily involve any sexual contact or even discussion of sexual activity if it is deemed to have the purpose of facilitating sexual activity at a later time. The offence can be committed by any person aged 18 years or over.

**Multi-dimensional harm** occurs where multiple abuse types are experienced at the same time e.g. sexual abuse also involves physical and emotional abuse.

**Neglect** – involves the failure to meet a child's basic needs, such as providing adequate food, drink, shelter, clothing, supervision, hygiene and medical attention to the extent that the child's health and development are, or are likely to be, placed at risk.

**Physical Abuse** - occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the inadvertent consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment of a child. This may take the form of punching, beating, shaking or otherwise harming a child.

## 9. APPENDICES

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Racial, cultural, religious, spiritual safety– is impacted through conduct that demonstrates contempt, ridicule, hatred or negativity towards a child because of their race, culture, religion or spiritual beliefs. Such conduct may be overt, such as direct racial vilification or discrimination, or covert such as demonstrating a lack of cultural respect (attitude and values) and awareness (knowledge and understanding) or failing to provide positive images about another culture. This conduct may result in significant emotional abuse of a child.

Sexual Abuse - occurs when a person uses power, force or authority to involve a child in any form of sexual activity. Sexual abuse may involve: touching or fondling; obscene or suggestive phone calls/texts; exhibitionism and or voyeurism; showing children or involving them in the production of pornographic images; penetration with penis, finger or other object into the mouth, anus or vagina.

Sexual exploitation - is considered a specific form of sexual abuse because children, by virtue of their age and development, are unable to give informed consent. Sexual exploitation of children takes different forms. It can include children being involved in sexually exploitive relationships, exposing a child to pornography, receiving money, goods, drugs or favours in exchange for sex with one or more adults, or being exploited in sex work. In all cases, those exploiting the children have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, physical strength, economic or other resources, such as access to drugs or gifts.

Sexually harmful behaviour in children – refers to harmful behaviour perpetrated by a child (17 years of age or younger) to another child. Harmful behaviours in children are often an indicator that they have experienced abuse or neglect. Where sexually harmful behaviour occurs, organisations have a duty of care to both children. Note that in children under 10 years of age, such behaviour is usually referred to as sexually problematic behaviour.



## 9. APPENDICES

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### 9.2 Appendix B Reporting & Complaints Template

If you believe a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm, contact the Police on 000 immediately. If you are not sure, contact a Child Wellbeing Officer for guidance. Following the report to the Police, the member is required to contact the Child Wellbeing Officer and complete the reporting template.

**Date:**

#### Person Reporting the Incident

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Position Title:</b>	
<b>Mobile No/Phone No:</b>	
<b>Email Address:</b>	
<b>Division/Area:</b>	

#### Details of Concern

<b>Date of concern:</b>	
<b>Time:</b>	
<b>Location:</b>	
<b>Name(s) of child(ren) or young person(s) involved:</b>	
<b>Name(s) of members involved:</b>	

#### Witness(es) if applicable

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Phone No</b>	<b>Email Address</b>

## 9. APPENDICES

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### Description

<b>Who was involved?</b>	
<b>What was reported?</b>	
<b>Protective action taken or implemented?</b>	
<b>Other relevant information</b>	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please forward completed form to Lead Child Wellbeing Officer or Child Wellbeing Officer upon completion.



## 9. APPENDICES

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### 9.3. Appendix C: Examples of When to Report Different Types of Abuse

**Physical Abuse:** You suspect a non-accidental injury or physical harm to a child/young person may have been caused by a parent/carer or other adult household member. You know of treatment of a child/young person by a parent/carer or other adult household member that may have caused or is likely to cause an injury or physical harm.

**Neglect:** Supervision; Shelter/Environment; Food; Hygiene/Clothing; Medical Care; Mental Health Care; Education - Not Enrolled; Education, Habitual Absence  
You suspect that a parent/carer is not adequately meeting a child's/young person's needs such as: supervision, shelter, medical care, hygiene/clothing, mental health care, schooling/education, nutrition, or other basic needs. A child/young person is a danger to self or others and parents/carers are not supervising or providing care.

**Psychological Harm:** A child/young person appears to be experiencing psychological/emotional distress and is a danger to self or others as a consequence of parent/carer behaviour. An underage marriage or similar union, where one of both partners is under 18 has occurred.

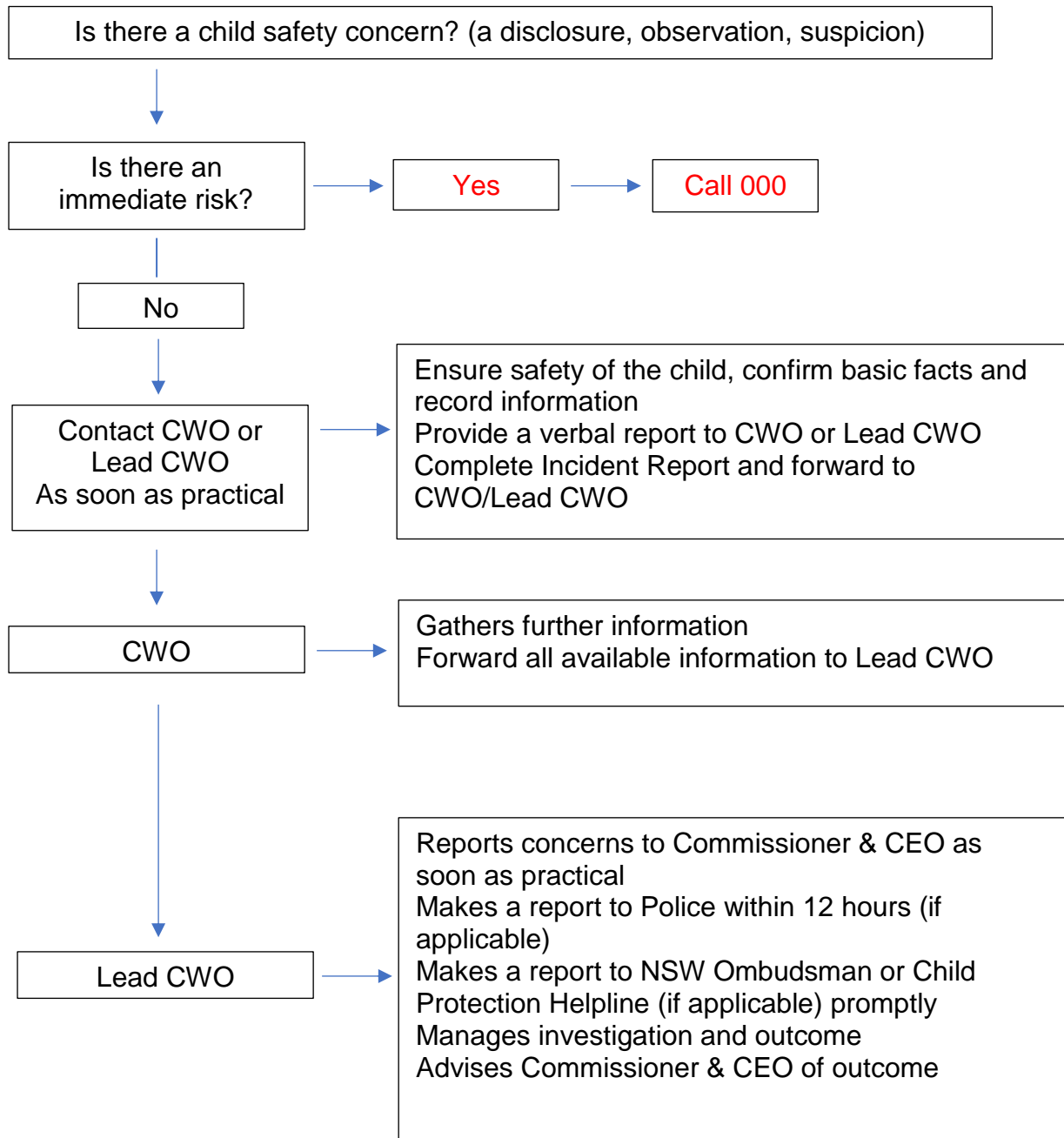
**Relinquishing Care:** Parent/carer states they will not or cannot continue to provide care for a child under the age of 16 or a young person over 16 and they are unable to make an informed decision (temporarily or permanently). Child/young person is in voluntary care for longer than legislation allows.

**Carer Concern:** Substance Abuse; Mental Health; Domestic Violence A child/young person is significantly affected by carer concerns such as substance abuse, mental health or domestic violence.

## 9. APPENDICES



### 9.4. Appendix D Child and Young Person Reporting Flowchart



#### Contact Details for CWO:

Lead CWO: 0432 750 968

CWO: 0457 334 003

CWO: 0428 035 506

\*\*Available 7 days a week

#### Definitions:

CWO = Child Wellbeing Officer

Lead CWO = Child Wellbeing Officer



# ST JOHN AMBULANCE (NSW)

## WEBSITE

[www.stjohnnsw.com.au](http://www.stjohnnsw.com.au)

## CONTACT

1300 St John (78 5646)

## ADDRESS

9 Deane Street, Burwood  
NSW 2134