



Commitment to Child Safety

How Northside upholds the requirements of the
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

child
SAFE at
NORTH
SIDE



If you require assistance or would like to talk to a trained professional about the issues described in this Commitment, there are a number of services you can contact:

- Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800
- Lifeline on 13 11 14
- 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732

Northside Community Service (Northside) is a not-for-profit, community-based organisation. We've been supporting our community in North Canberra – and beyond – since 1976. We're a progressive and modern community organisation that embraces diversity, social justice and advocacy for those in our community whose voices are often unheard.

Northside supports young children through our high-quality early education services, children and young people through our youth programs and family support services, older citizens through our aged care services and support programs, and the wider community through our housing, community development, outreach and volunteer programs.

This Statement applies to all Northside staff (including volunteers, students and contractors).



northside.asn.au
(02) 6171 8000
childsafety@northside.asn.au

Our Commitment to Child Safety

Northside endorses, supports and is committed to implementing the requirements of the **National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles)**. The National Principles identify positive ways that organisations can be safe places for children and young people, and call on organisations to embed those approaches across all the work they do.

Northside also endorses and supports the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**. The UNCRC recognises that children under the age of 18 years need special support and protection.

Northside also endorses and supports the requirements of legislation within the ACT relevant to protecting children, specifically **The Children and Young People Act, The Reportable Conduct Scheme for the ACT and The Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act**.

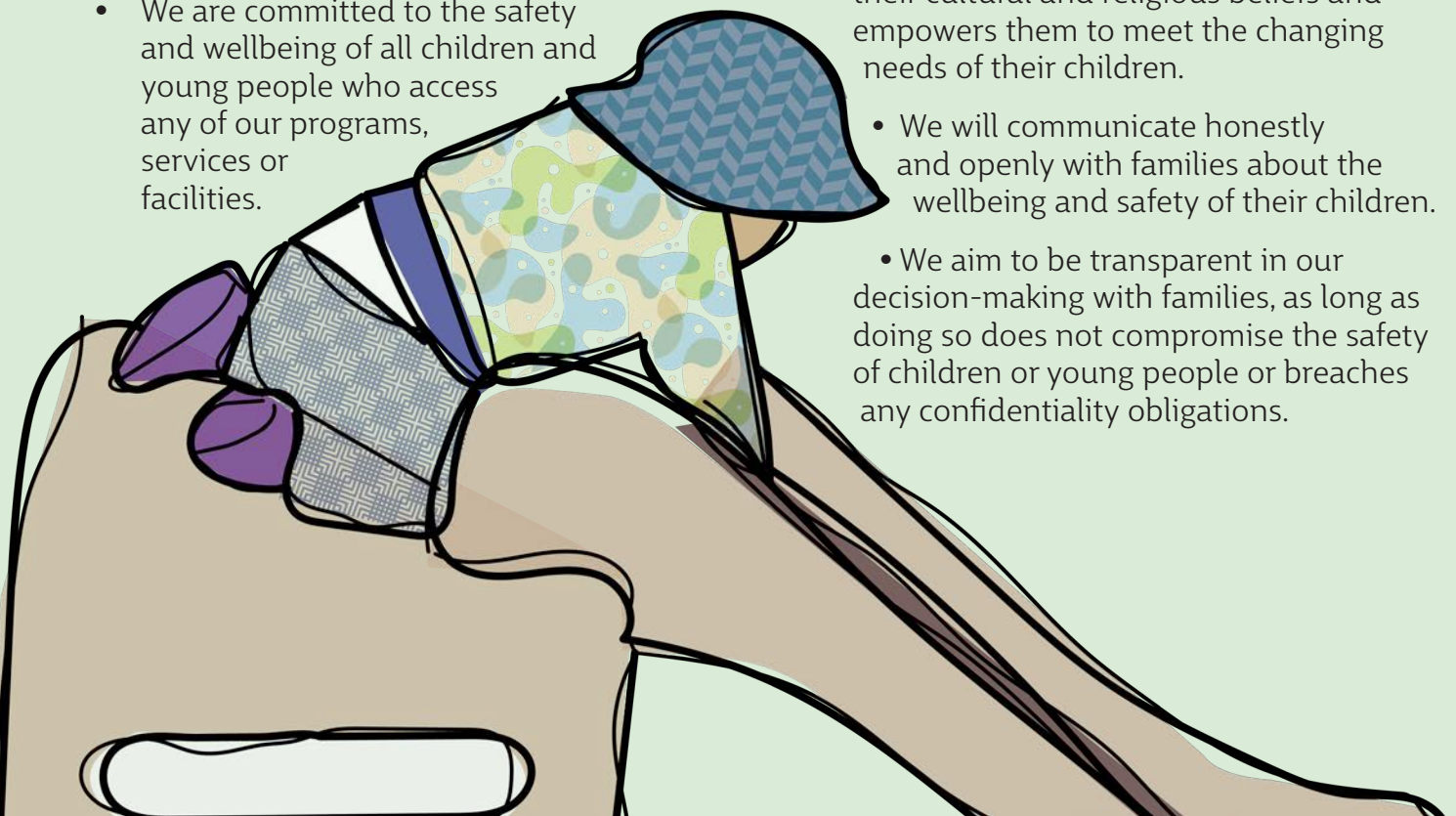
Our commitment to children and young people:

- We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who access any of our programs, services or facilities.

- We are committed to providing children with positive experiences that support their learning and wellbeing.
- We will support families and communities to promote children's learning, development and wellbeing.
- We will take action to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse, family violence and neglect.
- We will take action to ensure that children are not exploited, abused or harmed during the time that they are involved with any of our programs, services or facilities.
- We will listen to children, take their views seriously, and address any concerns that they raise with us.

Our commitment to families:

- We are committed to supporting families to protect their children.
- We will offer assistance that builds on a family's strengths, is sensitive to their cultural and religious beliefs and empowers them to meet the changing needs of their children.
- We will communicate honestly and openly with families about the wellbeing and safety of their children.
- We aim to be transparent in our decision-making with families, as long as doing so does not compromise the safety of children or young people or breaches any confidentiality obligations.



Our commitment to our team:

- We are committed to providing our staff with the necessary support to enable them to fulfill their roles.
- We will put in place a management structure that supports and develops staff in their roles.
- We are committed to providing our staff with appropriate guidance and development.
- We will work to ensure that our staff have access to a senior organisational role to make decisions in relation to any action required to protect children from abuse, bullying and exploitation.
- We will work to ensure that there are safeguards in place to protect our staff from violence or any kind of harassment in their work place.

Our commitment to ensuring a child-safe organisation:

- We are committed to using best practice standards in the recruitment, screening and employment of any staff members.
- We will work to create an environment in which children are safe and feel safe in any of our program activities, events or facilities.
- We will work to ensure that staff members do not harm, abuse or exploit children and young people who are involved with our programs, services or facilities.
- We will ensure that staff members fully understand and uphold their child safety obligations at Northside.

Our commitment to maintaining a child-safe culture:

Northside is committed to meeting all requirements of the National Principles.

“Underpinned by a child-rights approach and based on the standards recommended by the Royal Commission [into Institutional

Responses to Child Sexual Abuse], the National Principles are designed to build capacity and deliver child safety and wellbeing in organisations, families and communities and prevent future harm. The National Principles outline at a high level the 10 elements that are fundamental for making an organisation safe for children.” - National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, Australian Human Rights Commission 2018.

The 10 National Principles are:

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
6. Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Our Commitment in Action

The Northside Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer will:

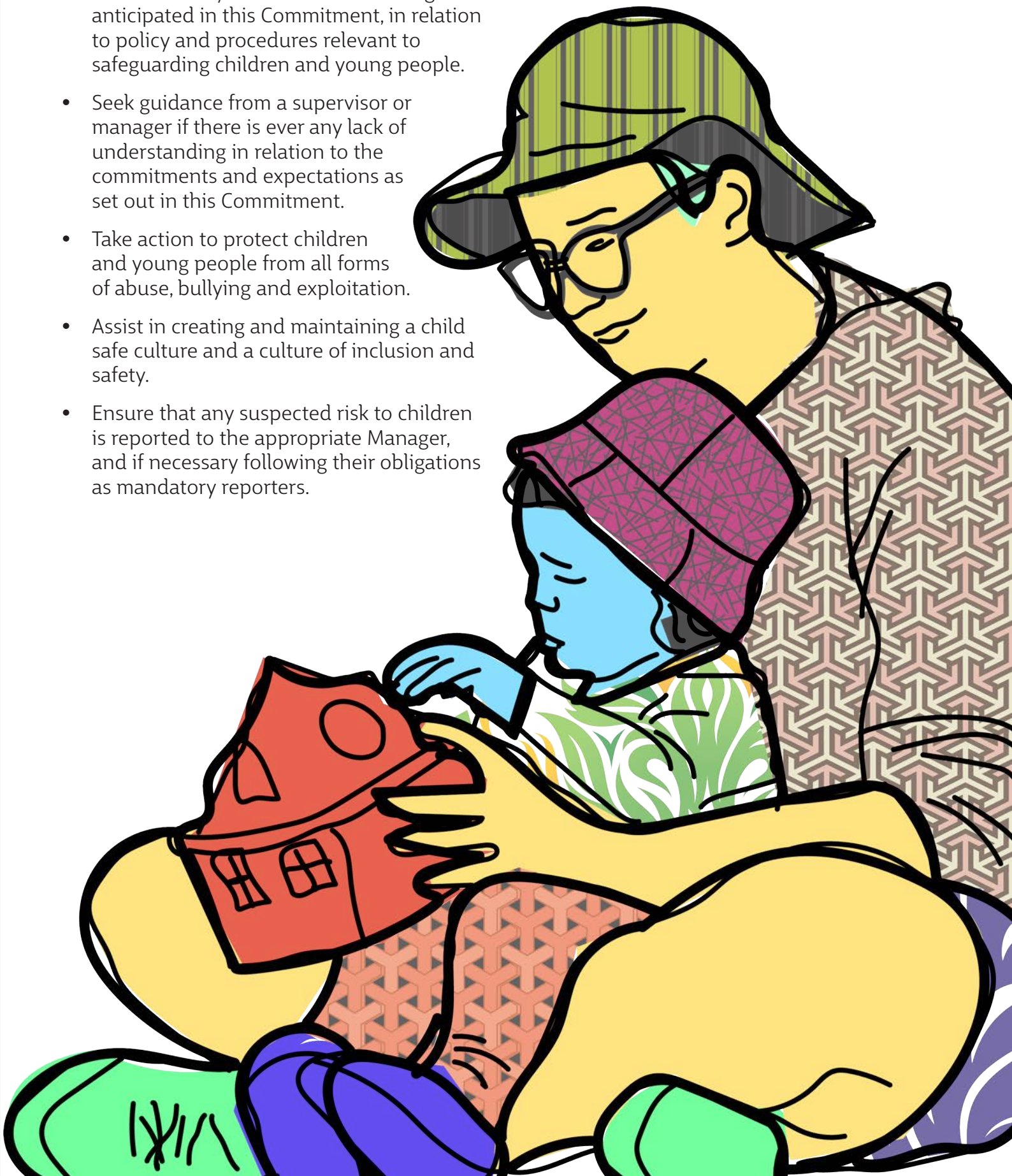
- Promote the commitment to this Commitment and its expectations.
 - Support policy review on an annual cycle as a minimum or at a time governed by legislation, regulations, or organisational learnings that promote a change to the Commitment and all relevant policy or procedural guidelines.
 - Ensure compliance to the Commitment via an organisational review mechanism.
 - Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow for the development and effective implementation of this policy.
 - Develop opportunities for regular discussion at all levels to support a culture of openness and continued improvement and accountability to child protection and member welfare.
 - Advocate for and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this Statement and its expectations.
- Ensure the development and implementation of required internal policy/work procedures and guidelines are in place to support child protection practice in accordance with the expectations of the Commitment.
 - Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation of the Commitment.
 - Support staff members in a collaborative way with a decision to initiate any form of action to protect a child from abuse, neglect, grooming or exploitation.
 - Ensure appropriate supports, such as counselling and formal debriefing, are provided for any staff members involved in a matter relating to responding to a concern for the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person.
 - Advocate for and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this Commitment.
 - Proactively share resources and experience in the development of child safety initiatives as they are identified.

The Northside Leadership Team and Managers will:

- Ensure all involved staff members understand their obligations in accordance with the Commitment to Child Safety and any relevant policy and procedural documentation. This includes induction, a minimum of training sessions, and regular discussion and guidance at supervision and team meetings.
 - Ensure the Commitment is implemented and adhered to amongst relevant stakeholders.
- Develop opportunities for regular discussion at all levels to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of child protection and member welfare.
 - Ensure that staff members are aware of the appropriate recruitment, screening and employment practice in relation to individuals with specific roles in working, coaching or volunteering with children and families.

All staff members will:

- Maintain a full understanding of the commitments and expectations of this Commitment, as well as all other policy relevant to safeguarding children and young people.
- Undertake any induction and training anticipated in this Commitment, in relation to policy and procedures relevant to safeguarding children and young people.
- Seek guidance from a supervisor or manager if there is ever any lack of understanding in relation to the commitments and expectations as set out in this Commitment.
- Take action to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation.
- Assist in creating and maintaining a child safe culture and a culture of inclusion and safety.
- Ensure that any suspected risk to children is reported to the appropriate Manager, and if necessary following their obligations as mandatory reporters.



Definitions

Bullying: Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person or group and is generally an act that is repeated over time. Bullying has been described by researchers as taking many forms which are often interrelated and include:

- Verbal (name calling, put downs, threats);
- Physical (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting);
- Social (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating); and/or
- Psychological (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions).

Child or young person: A person under the age of eighteen years.

Staff: Employees of Northside Community Service, including volunteers.

Direct role in providing activities, programs and services to children and young people: A direct role is considered one that has contact with children and young people that is not incidental, but normally part of providing a service, program or activity for children and young people. This direct delivery may require regular physical contact and forms of ongoing communication. For example, coaching.

Emotional or psychological abuse: Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a child does not receive the love, affection or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. Such abuse may involve repeated rejection or threats to a child. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule and rejection or continual coldness are all examples of emotional abuse. These behaviors continue to an extent that results in significant damage to the child's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.

Family violence: Family violence occurs when children are forced to live with violence between adults in their home. It is harmful to children. It can include



witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. 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 wellbeing and development.

Grooming: Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a child with a view to abusing them at some stage. There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of children. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the abuse begins. The child may be given special attention and, what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a child in and abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom children but abuse them without forming a relationship at all. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities, or in internet chatrooms, in social media or by other technological channels.

Harm: Harm to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by:

- physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect;
- sexual abuse or exploitation;
- a single act, omission or circumstance; and
- a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

Neglect: Neglect is the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide the child with the basic necessities of life. Such neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water,

medical attention or supervision to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed. Categories of neglect include physical neglect, medical neglect, abandonment or desertion, emotional neglect and educational neglect. The issue of neglect must be considered within the context of resources reasonably available.

Physical abuse: Physical abuse occurs when a person subjects a child to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a child. Physically abusive behavior includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, excessive and physically harmful over training, and kicking. It also includes giving children harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poison. Certain types of punishment, whilst not causing injury can also be considered physical abuse if they place a child at risk of being hurt.

Sexual abuse: Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or a person of authority (e.g. older) involves a child in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their power, authority or position over the child or young person for their own benefit. It can include making sexual comments to a child, engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching a child's genitals or breasts, oral sex or intercourse with a child. Encouraging a child to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos is also sexual abuse. Engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet is also considered sexual abuse.

Sexual exploitation: Sexual exploitation occurs when children are forced into sexual activities that are then recorded in some way and/or used to produce pornography. Such pornography can be in the form of actual photos or videos or published on the internet. Exploitation can also involve children who are forced into prostitution.

Further information

Northside regularly updates our policies, procedures, guidelines and information to ensure we are continuously improving. To make sure you have the most up-to-date information about how we can all work together to keep children safe, speak with your Manager.

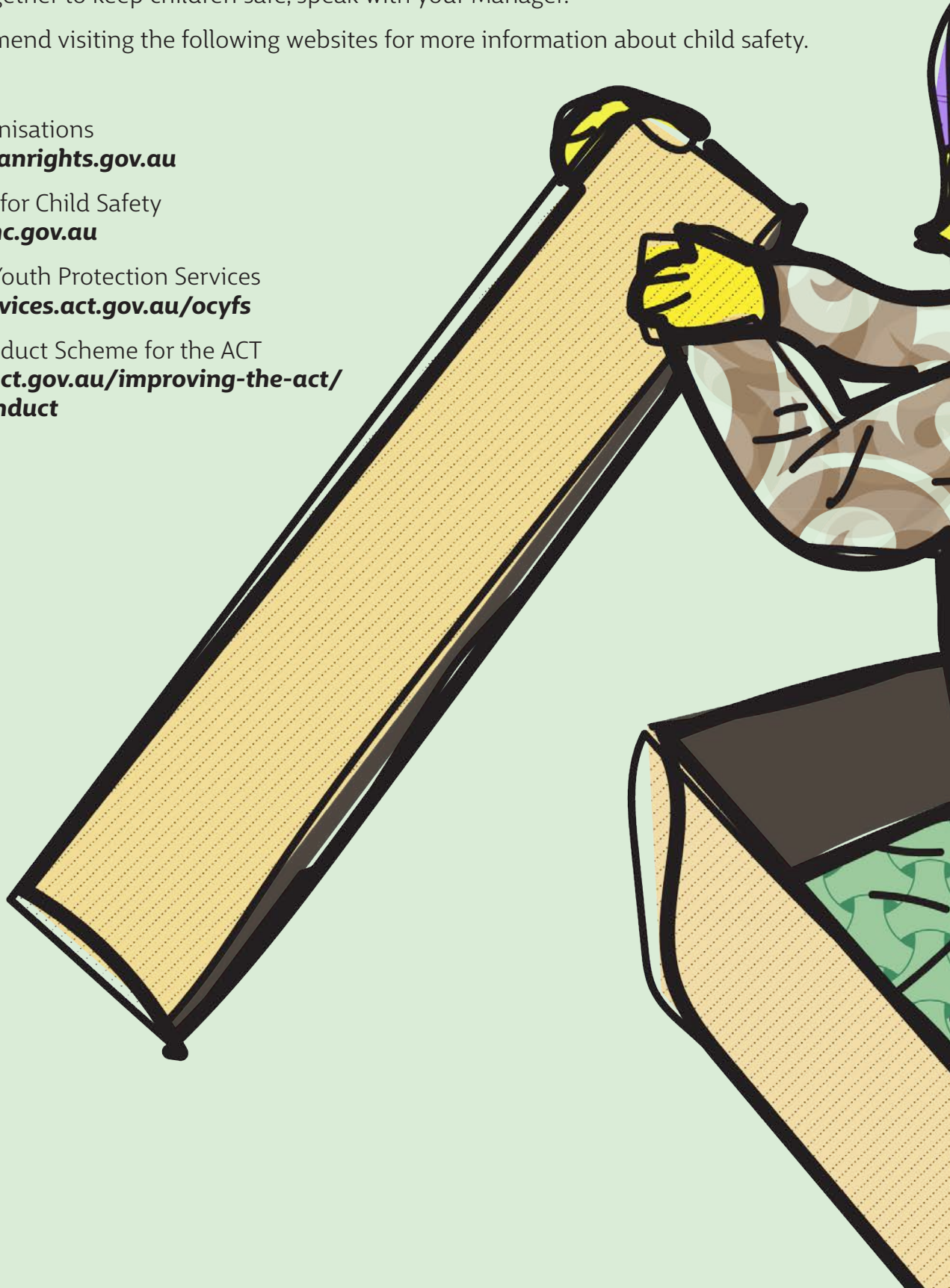
We also recommend visiting the following websites for more information about child safety.

Child Safe Organisations
childsafeforhumanrights.gov.au

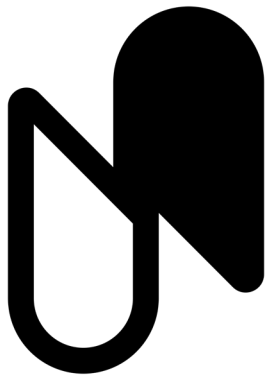
National Office for Child Safety
childsafety.pmc.gov.au

ACT Child and Youth Protection Services
communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs

Reportable Conduct Scheme for the ACT
ombudsman.act.gov.au/improving-the-act/reportable-conduct







northside.asn.au

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