

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

At Smartie Pants, we are deeply committed to the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of all children in our care. We have zero tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to create and maintain a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment where children are protected, heard, and valued.

Our commitment is guided by the 11 Child Safe Standards (Victoria, 2022) and underpinned by our robust Safe Environments Policy and Child Protection policies. These standards are not just principles—we embed them into everyday practice, decision-making, staff conduct, and community engagement.

Our Commitment in Practice

1. Our Commitment to the 11 Child Safe Standards

We commit to:

- Making the safety, rights, and best interests of every child the paramount consideration in all our decision-making and service operations.
- Upholding all 11 Child Safe Standards, including cultural safety for Aboriginal children, respecting diverse identities and experiences.
- Embedding child safety in leadership, governance and culture.
- Empowering children to participate in decisions and take their views seriously.
- Actively engaging families and communities in child safety and wellbeing.
- Promoting equity and respecting the diverse needs of all children.
- Ensuring staff and volunteers are suitable, well-trained and supported.
- Providing child-focused complaints processes that are accessible and responsive.
- Delivering ongoing education and training to maintain high standards of child safety.
- Creating safe physical and online environments, reducing risks of harm.
- Regularly reviewing and improving our implementation of the Standards.
- Ensuring all policies and procedures clearly articulate our child-safe approach.
- Protecting children from all forms of abuse and neglect, including physical, emotional, sexual, and psychological abuse, and ensuring that all staff understand and act on their mandatory reporting obligations. We strictly follow the national requirement to notify the regulatory authority within 24 hours of any incident or allegation of abuse.
- Placing the highest importance on privacy and managing the safe use of digital technologies, including strict rules for capturing and storing images of children to protect their online privacy.
- Clearly defining appropriate and inappropriate behaviour between adults and children, including maintaining appropriate professional boundaries.
- Valuing diversity by promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, inclusion for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and safe and supportive environments for children with a disability.
- Supporting new staff through a comprehensive three-month induction program, during which they are trained and assessed as competent in all child safety requirements and relevant policies.
- Maintaining a robust and ongoing commitment to the training and professional development of all staff to ensure continuous improvement and the highest standards of child safety and care.
- Requiring training to educate our team to recognise and respond to signs of abuse and neglect, first aid and emergency procedures, food safety and allergy management, and other critical child safety topics.
- Ensuring all educators complete the National Child Safety Training and are registered on the National Early Childhood Worker Register.
- Providing family support through our dedicated parent liaison team, ensuring open communication between families and educators.
- Educating children about their rights to safety, participation, and respect in alignment with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We support children to express themselves and feel confident in speaking up if they feel unsafe.
- Listening to children, taking all concerns seriously, and responding promptly and appropriately, as reflected in our policies and daily practices.

2. Our Commitment to Staffing Excellence

Our foundational safeguarding measure is our stable, highly experienced, and permanent team.

- **Exceptionally Low Staff Turnover** — Our stability means consistency and familiarity for children. We have a highly experienced team of 50 educators and support staff with more than 390 years of combined service in our centre.
- **Zero Reliance on Agency Workers** — We employ a long-serving core casual team, which virtually eliminates the need for temporary, unknown agency workers.
- **Above-Ratio Staffing for Superior Supervision** — We consistently operate well above the minimum educator-to-child ratios to ensure every child receives safe, attentive, and high-quality care. It is rare for any educator to be alone with children without interaction with other staff.
- **Thorough 3-Month Induction Program and ongoing training plans** — All new permanent and casual staff undergo a comprehensive 3-month induction before working independently with children. These are supported by ongoing training to support best practice in early childhood safety and care.

3. Robust Safety Measures and Technology

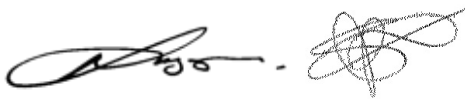
We use a combination of physical, procedural, and technological measures to create a secure environment.

- **Extensive CCTV Coverage** — We have over 40 cameras throughout the service to ensure constant visibility and transparency, including in storerooms and external play spaces.
- **Strict Visitor and Casual Restrictions** — Our strict policies and procedures prohibit non-Smartie Pants casuals, students, or visitors from ever being left alone with children at any time during their attendance.
- **Leading Child Safety Standards** — All team members undergo robust child safety and protection training annually, which is well above the required standards. Many of the industry protocols now being introduced have been part of our practice for nearly two decades.

4. Proven Quality and Accountability

Our long-term performance demonstrates our dedication to excellence.

- **Proven Quality** — We have proudly maintained an 'Exceeding' rating under the National Quality Standards for nearly two decades — a distinction held by only a small percentage of services nationwide.
- **Active Director Involvement** — As qualified early childhood teachers, our founders and directors, Natalie Higgins and Sharon Carrafa, have provided direct daily involvement for 20 years. They remain actively present and involved in centre operations, maintaining hands-on accountability for every aspect of the service.
- Natalie Higgins & Sharon Carrafa



Natalie Higgins & Sharon Carrafa (Reaffirmed 12 April 2026)