Participant Safeguarding
Policy & Procedure

Document Title	Rights and Responsibilities Policy and Procedure Manual
Document Reference	Rights & Responsibilities – National Core Module
Module	Core Module

Participant Safeguarding Policy

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all participants supported by In Step Supports Pty Ltd are safe, respected, and empowered to make their own decisions, while exercising choice, control and the dignity of risk.

In Step Supports Pty Ltd recognises that safeguarding is not only about protecting individuals from harm, but also about promoting independence, autonomy, and access to community life on equal terms. This includes ensuring the environment, relationships and services provided are trauma-informed, culturally safe, and inclusive of participants' identity, goals, and experiences.

Our safeguarding approach is designed to:

- Strengthen how we support people with disability, their families, and their informal support networks to create, maintain, or strengthen safeguards.
- Improve our capacity to proactively identify, assess, and respond to risks of harm or exploitation.
- Define clear roles and responsibilities within our organisation regarding participant safeguarding.
- Ensure accessible safeguarding resources and communication for both participants and staff.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all staff and others providing services or support to participants on behalf of In Step Supports Pty Ltd.

3.0 Policy

In Step Supports Pty Ltd is committed to providing services in a way that ensures participants are safe from harm and are supported to build safeguards that reflect their values, goals, and individual needs. We recognise safeguarding as a shared responsibility between the organisation, staff, the participant, their informal supports, and the broader community.

All safeguarding actions will be guided by the following national frameworks and requirements:

- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2021
- NDIS (Code of Conduct) Rules 2018
- NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework
- NDIS (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018

In Step Supports Pty Ltd adopts a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination.

We are guided by the six key principles outlined in the NDIS Safeguarding Framework:

1. **Safety culture** – promoting open communication, accountability, and transparency
2. **Empowerment** – enabling participants to speak up and take control
3. **Individual circumstances** – tailoring safeguards to participant needs and context
4. **Proactive support** – implementing safeguarding actions before harm occurs
5. **Dignity of risk and informed decision-making** – supporting autonomy while managing risk
6. **Informal support networks** – recognising the importance of trusted relationships in safety

To uphold these principles, In Step Supports Pty Ltd will:

- Conduct mandatory pre-employment screening, including police checks and Working with Children Checks, and renew these annually.
- Ensure all workers understand and meet their obligations under the NDIS Code of Conduct.
- Operate a safeguarding system integrated with our Risk Management, Incident Management, and Continuous Improvement systems.
- Promote risk awareness and shared decision-making with participants through person-centred planning.
- Support participants to develop their own safeguarding strategies, including linking to natural supports and community connections.
- Offer training and capability-building for both staff and participants to reduce vulnerability to harm.
- Encourage open reporting and continuous review through our Incident Management System.

- Ensure that all incidents involving violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation are treated as reportable incidents and managed in accordance with our *Reportable Incident, Accident and Emergency Policy and Procedure*.

We will work with participants to tailor safeguards that meet their cultural, communication and accessibility needs, and will always seek to involve them in decisions about how risks are managed and safety is promoted.

4.0 Procedure

In Step Supports Pty Ltd will implement this policy through the four key focus areas:

1) Proactive approach to identifying, assessing, and managing risks through our risk management and incident management policy and processes.
2) Developing workforce capability by ensuring our Recruitment and Selection, Staff Training and Human Resources Policies and processes:
    a. select workers with the right skills and knowledge to support people with disability,
    b. undergo all checks required including police and working with children,
    c. have monthly training to keep them updated on skills and knowledge required to support people with a disability.

3) Working with people with disability to proactively develop safeguards through:
    a. regular communication channels such as Participant Information Manuals and
    b. six monthly plan meetings
    c. Risk, Incident and Quality management processes
4) Effective corrective measures in response to incidents through:
    a. Ensuring staff are trained to assist participants to:
        i. know what they might be at risk of
        ii. think about if they are at risk
        iii. manage risks
    b. Including networks in the community to support participants to know who they can contact and what to do before they are needed
    c. Assist participants if anything goes wrong by ensuring we have sufficient support processes and policies in place and staff trained to manage these

All safeguarding concerns, including suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation, must be treated as reportable incidents and managed in accordance with the Reportable Incident, Accident and Emergency Policy and Procedure When identifying, assessing, and managing risks, In Step Supports Pty Ltd will:

- Use trauma-informed and culturally safe approaches tailored to the participant's background, culture, and identity.
- Involve participants, families, and advocates in planning their safeguards.
- Respect participant dignity of risk, while applying safeguards to prevent harm wherever possible.
- Train staff on recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns, including their mandatory reporting obligations under the NDIS (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018.

5.0 References

- NDIS (Code of Conduct) Rules 2018
- NDIS (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018
- NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework
- Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Commonwealth)
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators (2021)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- www.ndis.gov.au/participantsafeguarding
- www.ndis.gov.au
- Participant Safeguarding Policy Implementation Plan (NDIS)
- Participant Safeguarding Policy Easy Read

6.0 Definitions

Term	Description
Safeguards might include:	• getting support to make decisions. • building relationships with people who can help. • learning how to stay safe, using accessible information.
Accessible information	When information is accessible, it is easy to: • find and use. • understand.
Support network	A support network is all the people who support people with disability to use safeguards
Dignity of Risk	The right of participants to make their own decisions and take risks as part of leading an independent and fulfilling life, even if this includes the possibility of failure
Violence	when someone hurts you
Abuse	when someone treats you badly
Neglect	when someone is not helping you the way they are supposed to
Exploitation	Taking advantage of a person for personal gain, including through financial, sexual, emotional, or other forms of abuse or manipulation