



Annual Child Safety Statement 2020-21

Our commitment

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is committed to implementing the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework (CCSF).

Interaction with children

NHMRC staff and contractors do not interact with children as part of NHMRC's standard activities.

NHMRC funds third parties to undertake health and medical research, which may involve children. NHMRC-funded research is conducted by universities, medical research institutes (MRIs), hospitals, and a range of other approved Administering Institutions. Under clauses 4.1, 4.2 and 24 of the NHMRC Funding Agreement, Administering Institutions must comply, and require their Participating Institutions, Research Activities and funding applications to comply, with any applicable Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government requirement.

NHMRC enforces the requirements of the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse. Institutions named in applications to the Redress Scheme, or to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse that have not joined the Redress Scheme or signified their intent to join within the required timeframes, are ineligible to access NHMRC grant funding.

In addition all NHMRC-funded researchers are required to be aware of and conform to the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2007 (updated 2018)*, including the guidelines in Chapter 4.2 for research involving children and young people. These guidelines address ethical issues in research and focus on the imperative to show due respect to children and young people. They address issues such as children's decision-making capacity, consent, potential coercion by parents, peers and others and conflicting values and interests of parents and children. The guidelines apply to the recruitment into, and conduct of, research.

Compliance

NHMRC was not fully compliant with the four requirements of the CCSF during 2020-21. NHMRC will implement the following actions in 2021-22 to comply with these requirements:

- Establish and communicate a Child Safety Policy that meets the requirements of the CCSF
- Provide training to staff about their obligations under the CCSF
- Strengthen child safety requirements and compliance reporting for third parties funded by NHMRC.

Risk assessment

The risks to child safety as a result of NHMRC activity have been assessed as LOW.

The key sources of risk are:

- Lack of awareness of child safety requirements by NHMRC staff, contractors or third parties
- Non-compliance by a funded third party with its child safety obligations.

As noted above, NHMRC will be implementing actions in 2021-22 to strengthen its compliance with the CCSF. These are also the actions required to mitigate the identified risks from the 2020-21 assessment.