



Safe Environment Policy Manual

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Safe Environment

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

OAPL is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all clients/participants. We are committed to providing a safe environment where participants are comfortable, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their AT goals and service provision.

All staff involved in participant-related work are required to comply with the NDIS and AOPA Codes of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour. These Codes of Conduct apply in all situations, including planned activities and in the use of digital technology and social media.

OAPL recognises its duty of care to be mandatory notifiers of suspected abuse and neglect. Where abuse, harm or neglect has occurred, OAPL will respond quickly, considerately and effectively to ensure all reporting is in line with standards. All clinical staff are required to read the Mandatory Reporting Guide and some senior staff have completed additional training in providing safe environments for children and young people.

OAPL recognises that prevention strategies should include the employment of skilled staff who respect the rights of participants and who are aware of current legislation and policies pertaining to abuse and neglect. Such staff will assist participants and their families or guardians to access complaints mechanisms and to raise any concerns they have about service provision.

All staff have a responsibility to ensure the wellbeing and safety of clients/participants.

POLICY

This policy aims to:

- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to participant safety;
- Value and empower participants to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
- Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to participants
- Respect diversity in cultures and/or child-rearing practices while keeping participant safety paramount;
- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards participants;
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with participants and have high quality staff and professional development;
- Ensure participants know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities (refer to Working with Children Policy and Procedures for process);
- Ensure that participants are aware that they have the right to receive AT in a safe environment;
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of participant is at risk; and
- Value the input of and communicate regularly with families, advocates or representatives.
- Ensures OAPL is a safe environment for the participant.

Application, Steps and Process

Strategies to embed an organisational culture of client / participant safety

1. As part of Annual compliance and business monitoring activities, OAPL has and will continue to review safe practices and standards.
2. OAPL annually engages in a review of its philosophy and business practices with the purpose of ensuring that policies, procedures and practice are underpinned by the aims of this policy
3. The Manager will continue to provide advice and ensure leadership around participant safe principles

Acceptable behaviours

As staff involved in NDIS participant-related work, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of participants by:

- Upholding the OAPL's commitment to participant safety at all times (Including and adhering to the NDIS worker screening requirements);
- Treating participant and/or family and/or advocate with respect;
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of participant and/or family and/or advocate particularly if they are telling you that they have been abused or that they are worried about their safety;
- Respecting the safety of all individuals that attend OAPL;
- Reporting any allegations of child or participant abuse or other child safety concerns to the Manager;
- Understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting see Working with Children Policy and Procedure) as they relate to protecting participant from harm or abuse;

Unacceptable behaviours

As staff involved in participant-related work we must not:

- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of abuse
- Develop a relationship with any participant that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
- Exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with participants which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the service delivery context
- Ignore behaviours by other adults towards young participants when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- Discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with participants
- Treat a participant unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- Communicate directly with an underage participant through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where

that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to work or activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter

Screening, supervising, training and HR practices to reduce the risk of child abuse

All staff will be required to undertake checks including both Working with Children and Disability Service check. OAPL has completed the following checks.

Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

OAPL recognises that creating a safe organisation begins with a clear understanding of the potential risks to participants in an organisation's setting – what could go wrong and what you can do to reduce or remove these risks.

To reduce the likelihood of harm, OAPL will consider, define and acted against its organisational risks.

This includes:

- Thinking about the organisation, its activities and the services it provides to participant and participants,
- Planning how to make activities as safe as possible,
- Develop a safe strategies for individuals who require additional supports,
- Supporting participants with disabilities to understand the AT that they have been provided with and safety procedures in a manner that supports their understanding,
- Being proactive to reduce the likelihood of risks.

To report child abuse please go to Working with Children Policy and Procedure for this process.

REFERENCES

- The Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- The National Framework for protecting Australia's Children
- NDIS (Quality and Safeguards) Commission 2018
- Children and Young People (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- ADHC Child protection guidelines

http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/file/0019/232732/ADHC_Child_Protection_Guidelines.pdf