



Working with Children Policy Manual

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Working with Children (Child Protection Policy)

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

OAPL recognises the right of participants to feel safe and to live in an environment where they are protected from assault, neglect, exploitation or any other form of abuse.

This policy specifically looks at the requirements when working with clients/participants under the age of 18 years.

It is the legislative policy that staff engaged in a Risk Assessed Role must have;

- “Working with Children Check”, as at May 2019 this is an approved certificate. Clinical staff are cleared for working with children and those with a disability.

<u>Victoria</u>	Dept of Justice – Working with Children
<u>Queensland</u>	Qld Government – Blue Card – Working with Children
<u>New South Wales</u>	Office of the Children’s Guardian – Working with Children check
<u>Western Australia</u>	WA Government – Working with Children check

OAPL clinical staff as mandatory notifiers are required to report any indicators which put the child at Risk of Serious Harm (ROSH) as required under the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017.

PROCEDURE

When to Report an Abusive Situation

It is important to always search for the cause of a change in a child’s behaviour or unexplained physical symptoms. If a child shows one or more of the possible signs of abuse (as listed below), it does not automatically mean she or he is being abused, but it must be reported.

Manager will then report the ROSH to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) 13 14 78.

All new clinical staff are required to read through the Mandatory Reporting Guide as part of their induction prior to treating any person under the age of 18.

Defining Child Maltreatment, abuse and neglect

Child abuse and neglect refers to any behaviour by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that is outside the norms of conduct and entails a substantial risk of causing physical or emotional harm to a child or young person. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e. neglect) and commission (i.e. abuse).

Physical Abuse

Signs & Symptoms: Bruising, lacerations, welts, rashes, broken or healing bones, burns, weight loss, facial swelling, missing teeth, pain or restricted movements, crying, acting fearful, agitation, drowsiness, hair loss and poor physical well-being.

Causes: Hitting, slapping, pushing, punching or burning which entails an incident that is non-accidental resulting in pain or injury.

Psychological / Emotional Abuse

Signs & Symptoms: Loss of interest in self-care, helplessness, withdrawn, apathy, insomnia, fearfulness, reluctant to communicate openly, chooses not to maintain eye contact, paranoia and confusion.

Causes: Intimidation, humiliation, harassment, threatening, sleep deprivation, withholding affection, not allowing the person to maintain their own decision-making powers which leads to a pattern repeated over time.

Financial Abuse

Signs & Symptoms: Unpaid accounts, withholding funds, loss of jewellery and/or personal belongings, removal of cash from wallet or purse, agitated when discussing money, not providing money for outings and personal items and a person who takes over the care of someone's money without permission.

Causes: Misuse of person's money, valuables or property, forced changes to legal documents (such as a will) denying access to or control of personal funds, stealing, fraud, forgery, embezzlement, misuse of power of attorney & taking away decision making powers of a person.

Sexual Abuse

Signs & Symptoms: Unexplained sexual transmitted disease, vaginal/anal bleeding, fearful of certain people or places, bruising to genital areas inner thigh or around breasts, anxiety, torn or bloody underclothes, difficult in walking or sitting, change in sleep pattern and repeating night mares.

Causes: Rape (penetration and/or oral-genital contact), interest in older person's bodies, inappropriate comments and sexual references, inappropriate (possible painful) administration of enemas or genital cleansing, indecent assault, sexual harassment which is mainly about violence and power over another person, rather than sexual pleasure.

Neglect

Signs & Symptoms: Poor hygiene or personal care, unkempt appearance, lack of personal items, absence of health aids, weight loss, agitation, and inappropriate lack of clothing or food

Cause: The intentional failure to provide basic life necessities.

Social Abuse

Signs & Symptoms: Sadness & grief because people not visiting, anxiety after a certain person visiting, withdrawal, low self-esteem, appearing ashamed, passivity, listlessness

Causes: Prevention of people having contact with friends or family, preventing access to social activities.

A report must be made if:

- A child shows a change in behaviour or mood that may indicate they are being abused.

- You observe someone behaving towards a child in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- A child tells you that they are being abused by another person.
- A person tells you that they are abusing a child.
- A child or visitor tells you that they have observed abusive acts.
- You observe an action or inaction that may be considered abusive.
- You suspect or have any reason to believe a child is being abused
- **Failure to report an abusive situation may result in a Criminal Offence.**

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Incident Form
- Code of Ethics and Conduct Form
- Risk Management Form
- Policies and Procedures

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
- NCCD Mandatory Reporting Guide SA 2018
- Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017