

Child Safe Environments Policy

Commitment to the safety of children and young people

The organisation is committed to providing a safe environment to all children and young people. Our policy complies with the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017, the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 and aligns with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. We value and respect children and young people and welcome them regardless of their abilities, sex, gender, or social, economic or cultural background and equity is upheld. Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated.

Definitions

Feedback: both positive and negative information which provides scope for improvement (and is not regarded as a complaint).

Organisation: means Summit Health Inc, Summit Health Centre and all other subsidiaries.

Organisational location: any Summit Health location - including any other locations where Summit Health is a tenant (or equivalent).

Workers: means an individual that performs work for, on behalf of, or as a representative of the organisation. This may include employees, board members, contractors, consultants, clinicians, students and volunteers.

At work: an individual is at work when carrying out any type of work in any capacity for the organisation.

Consumer: means people who access our service, as well as their family and carers.

Scope of policy

This policy applies to all workers and is part of the organisational induction process following recruitment. All workers are required to act in accordance with the policy.

Communication

This Child Safe Environments policy and related documents are provided to all workers as part of their induction following recruitment.

This child safe policy and related documents are available on our intranet and our website and can be made available to anyone accessing Summit Health services and programs.

We encourage and respect the views of children and young people and involve them in decision making as appropriate. We provide clear age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate explanations to children and young people including their right to safety, their right to be listened to and that they can provide feedback or make a complaint if they have a concern, or ask their parent / guardian to do this on their behalf. We will listen to and act upon any complaints or concerns that a child or young person raises with us.

Code of Conduct for working with children and young people

All workers are responsible for promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:

- Complying with the organisation's child safe policy at all times and taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people.
- Treating everyone including those of different race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes and religious beliefs with respect and honesty and ensure equity is upheld.
- Being a positive role model to children and young people in all conduct with them.
- Setting clear boundaries about appropriate behaviour between yourself and children and young people – boundaries help everyone to understand their roles.
- Listening and responding appropriately to the views and concerns of children and young people.
- Being alert to bullying behaviours and responding promptly and appropriately.
- Ensuring another adult is always present or in sight when conducting one to one consulting, coaching, instruction or other activity.
- Being alert to children and young people who have been harmed, or may be at risk of harm and reporting this quickly to the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78).
- Responding quickly, fairly and transparently to any complaints made by a child, young person or their parent/guardian.
- Encouraging children and young people to 'have a say' on issues that are important to them.

Workers must not:

- Engage in rough physical games.
- Develop any 'special' relationships with children and young people that could be seen as favouritism such as the offering of gifts or special treatment.
- Do things of a personal nature that a child or young person can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Discriminate against any child or young person because of age, gender, cultural background, religion, vulnerability or sexuality.

Breaches or suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct should be reported as soon as practicable to the General Manager. Breaches or suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and dealt with quickly, fairly and transparently.

Contact details for the General Manager can be found on the Summit Health website via this link: [Our Management Team - Summit Health](#)

Any worker who breaches the Code of Conduct may face disciplinary action and depending on severity of the breach, the worker may have their employment terminated.

Recruitment

To ensure we engage the most suitable people to work with children and young people, we have the following recruitment practices in place:

- written applications from applicants
- at least two referee checks and qualification checks.

In accordance with the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016, our organisation is registered

with the DHS Screening Unit and we link all Working with Children Checks (WWCC). All workers who will be working in a role with children and young people must hold a current, not prohibited WWCC issued by the Screening Unit of the Department of Human Services, provide evidence of this prior to employment and renew this every five years. We verify the accuracy of all WWCCs in the DHS Screening Unit portal as required by law, and register our interest.

We would immediately contact the Department of Human Services Screening Unit should we become aware of certain information regarding any person involved with our organisation, including any serious criminal offence, child protection information, or disciplinary or misconduct information.

Training, supervision and support for workers

The organisation has strategies in place to supervise, train and support workers to understand our child safe policy, their mandatory reporting obligations, how to build culturally safe environments and their responsibilities to create a child safe and friendly environment. Our strategies include:

Training:

the following internal documents:

- Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect; A Guide for Summit Health staff, contractors, Board and volunteers.
- Child Safe Environments and Child Abuse Reporting Knowledge Test.

Training

- Ensure all workers read and understand this Child Safe Environments policy and Reporting child harm or risk of harm, and complete the Child Safe Environments Knowledge Assessment during induction and at each three year interval as a minimum. Externally provided Child Safe Environments training programs may also be attended.
- Mandatory Notification Information Booklet available at: https://dhs.sa.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/103179/CSE-Mandatory-notification-information-booklet.PDF

Supervision

- Regular supervision sessions that may include a focus on child safety and wellbeing.

Support

- An induction process for all new workers including a copy of this policy document.
- Regular performance appraisals that may include child safeguarding.
- General Manager appointed as the child safety officer within the organisation.

Reporting and responding to harm or risk of harm

We aim to ensure that children and young people are safe from harm and risk of harm. Section 17 of the Safety Act defines 'harm' to mean physical or psychological harm (whether caused by an act or omission), including harm caused by sexual, physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect.

Mandated notifiers in our organisation are workers who:

- provide services to children and young people
- hold a management position in the organisation the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of those services to children and young people.

Mandated notifiers have a legal obligation to notify the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78 as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable belief that a child or young person is or may be at risk of harm. If the child or young person is at immediate risk, report to South Australia Police (SAPOL) on 000. In cases involving Aboriginal children and young people, support is provided by Yaitya Tirramangkotti - an Aboriginal team, via the CARL number.

Even if not a mandated reporter, any person can report harm or risk of harm to a child or young person. The individual who identifies the harm or risk of harm is encouraged to make the report to authorities and can request the support from another worker to do so if required.

Information about making appropriate reports of harm or risk of harm is available from the South Australian Department of Child Protection website: <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse>.

All adult workers (even if not a mandated notifier) have a legal obligation to report child sexual abuse to the police and to protect a child from sexual abuse. Failure to meet these obligations may be considered a criminal offence.

Following a report being made to CARL or SAPOL workers must make an internal report to management.

The organisation will be guided by the Department for Child Protection and/or SAPOL after a report has been made as to whether we can conduct an internal investigation.

If a worker is reported to CARL or SAPOL for causing harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, they will be removed from any role that involves working with any child or young person until authorities have concluded their investigation.

Following a report to CARL or SAPOL we will support the child or young person by:

- Referring the child, young person or their family to other appropriate services
- Continuing to provide a service to the child, young person and their family and monitor their circumstances.
- We will document all information received regarding the report and store this securely .

Reporting and responding to general complaints or feedback

Providing opportunities for complaints and feedback ensures that children, young people and their families feel valued and respected and enables us to improve the quality of our service. Children, young people and their families are informed that they can provide feedback or make a complaint at their first appointment.

The organisation has clear policies and procedures for managing concerns or complaints raised by children and young people or workers, outlined in the Feedback policy and procedure.

The organisation also accepts feedback and complaints from children and young people through the SH, GPcare, CONNECTcare and SHC webpages at www.summithealth.org.au

Feedback can also be provided by

- telephone on 08 8406 7700
- email at admin@summithealth.org.au

- post addressed to PO Box 1794 Mount Barker SA 5251.

The General Manager is the Child Safety Contact Person for the purpose of complaints pertaining to child safety. Contact details for the General Manager can be found on the Summit Health website via this link: [Our Management Team - Summit Health](#).

We will deal with all complaints and feedback received from children, young people or their families promptly, sensitively and fairly. We will:

- listen to the complaint/feedback.
- the person receiving the complaint will make a record of it if received verbally.
- advise of the time expected for an outcome.
- if a worker receives a complaint, they must forward it to the General Manager as soon as possible.
- management will respond to the complainant with an outcome within 7 working days.
- clearly document and securely store decisions and actions taken in response to complaints and feedback
- make sure that procedural fairness is followed at all times.

If the child, young person or their family is not happy with the outcome from the complaints process they can contact

- Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner 8226 8666 or Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency 1300 419 495
- Australian Human Rights Commission Online: www.humanrights.gov.au Tel: 1300 656 419
- South Australian Equal Opportunities Commission (for complaints relating to discrimination) Online: www.eoc.sa.gov.au Tel: 08 8207 1977.

Risk Management

These risks have been identified as having potential impact.

Identified risk	Actions to minimise risk
Culture of organisation is not child-safe focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child focused Code of Conduct is in place that sets the behavioural standards expected including what happens should a breach occur. • Culture of management reflects our strong commitment to the safety of children and young people. • We meet the requirements of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (which mandates child safe environments) and the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 (which mandates Working with Children Checks). • Child Safety Contact Person role in place.
Organisational workers harm children/young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment processes (including undertaking referee checks) ensure the suitability of persons before they are employed/volunteer with our organisation. • All workers have WWCC with 'not prohibited' result prior to working with children and young people. • WWCCs updated every 5 years and status remains as not prohibited. • Children and young people and their families can be given a copy of our Child Safe Environments policy and complaints and feedback process.
Organisational workers don't understand their obligations to report harm and risk of harm to the Child Abuse Report Line (or SAPOL if child/young person is at immediate risk)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All workers trained in organisational Child Safe Environments training on commencement and refresher training every 3 years after. • All workers must abide by the child safe environments policy and Code of Conduct.
Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people are to be supervised by parents / guardians at all times. • When providing one to one consultation with a child or young person, it will be in line of sight of another adult.
Taking images of children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consent of child young person and their parent / guardian is required. • Disclosure will be made as to how the image is to be used and consent must be provided by the child, young person and parent / guardian.
Physical environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a risk register that is reviewed annually to ensure effectiveness.
Privacy and confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All documents containing confidential information will be stored privately with restricted access. • Digital files containing confidential information shall be protected electronically by restricting the access to only those requiring it to perform their duties.

Policy review

The organisation will, at a minimum, review this policy and the related procedures once every 5 years as required by the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017. The policy will also be reviewed when:

- New or added risks are identified for children or young people, which may require a change in the policy or procedures
- A critical incident where a child or young person has experienced harm through involvement in the organisation
- Concerns are raised by anyone involved in our organisation about child safety or welfare in the organisation
- Awareness or compliance to the child safe policy and/or procedures is low
- Legislative changes / requirements.

A new child safe environments compliance statement will be lodged with the Department of Human Services each time the policy is reviewed and updated.

Related policies and procedures

Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017

Mandatory Notification Information Booklet:

[https://dhs.sa.gov.au/ data/assets/pdf file/0003/103179/CSE-Mandatory-notification-information-booklet.PDF](https://dhs.sa.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/103179/CSE-Mandatory-notification-information-booklet.PDF)

South Australian Department of Child Protection website:

<https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse>

Child Safe Environments policy

Reporting child harm or risk of harm

Child Safe Environments Knowledge Assessment

Risk Management Policy and Procedure

Staff Critical Incidents Policy / Procedure

Summit Health Confidentiality and Privacy Policy

Feedback Policy

Criminal History Screening Policy and Procedure

Clinical governance

Pillar 4: Risk Management

Document control

Current at: 16 April 2024

Review date: 16 April 2029