

Child Safe Environment Policy



Introduction

- We want children and young people who participate in our therapy programs, either individually or as part of a group, to have a safe and happy experience.

- We support, value and respect children, young people, staff, volunteers, and students.

- We have zero tolerance for harm, or risk of harm, bullying and harassment, and we will ensure that all children, young people, staff, volunteers, and students are kept safe at all times within our care.

Our policy guides Therabees staff, volunteers and students on how to behave with children in our organisation in accordance with the [Children & Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017](#) and the National Principles for child safe organisations which relate to creating child safe environments. The policy focuses on how we can promote a child or young person's participation in our organisation and ensure their safety.

Scope of Policy

Therabees Child Safe Environment Policy applies to all employees of Therabees including management, staff, work experience and university placement students, contractors, children, young people, and families. Direct employees of Therabees are expected to accept and act in accordance with the Child Safe Environments Policy, outside contractors and student placements will be provided a copy of this policy and are expected to accept and act on the policy as a condition of their contract agreements with Therabees.

Commitment to the Safety of Children and Young People

All children and young people are valued, respected, and encouraged to participate and that the safety and protection of children and young people is always the first priority.

Our Child Safe Environment Policy complies with the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017, Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. Therabees commitment to diversity i.e., all children and young people are embraced regardless of their abilities, sex, gender, or social economic or cultural background and equity is upheld. Under no circumstances will bullying and harassment will not be tolerated.

Supporting Participation

Therabees supports the active participation of children and young people in our organisation. We listen to their views, respect what they say and involve them when we make decisions, especially about matters that will directly affect them. These supports are offered via consultation methods suited to the client, considering age, development level and cultural background. An age-appropriate feedback form is also available on our website at www.therabees.com.au. Therabees makes our Child Safe Environment Policy available to children, young people, and families / carers on our website and / or on request as well as being provided as part of the New Client Participant handbook on or before their initial appointment. The policy is also available to all staff, volunteers and student placements on the company drive as well provided as part of the induction process.

Support Staff, Volunteers and Students

1. We promote respect, fairness and consideration for all staff, volunteers, and students.
2. All new staff, volunteers and students have a senior staff member assigned to support and supervise their work.
3. All new staff, volunteers and students will receive a copy of the Child-safe Policy, Code of Conduct, and a Handling of Complaints policy.
4. All staff employed or on placement with Therabees must complete, at a minimum, the responding to Risk of Harm, Abuse and Neglect fundamentals course (for casual placement staff) in addition to the Risk of Harm, Abuse and Neglect masterclass course. A refresher course must be completed every 3 years for all employed staff.
5. Upon induction all staff are expected to read, and then after 12 months of service with Therabees, review the: Safe environments for children and young people mandatory information booklet. https://dhs.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/82659/cse-mandatory-notification-information-booklet-2019-dhs-update.pdf

Recruitment

1. Statement – Therabees will maintain a rigorous and consistent recruitment, screening, and selection process.
2. Practice – Therabees ensures that all recruitment practices include job descriptions outlining a clear commitment to child safety and wellbeing, successful applicants who are then at the interview stage will be asked multiple behavioural questions on child protection. A minimum of 2 referees must be provided by the applicant and Therabees will call to gain any additional information to ensure that a suitable candidate is employed. Applicants must also hold a "not prohibited" WWCC (Working with Children Check) via Screening Unit Online Organisational Portal of the Department of Human Services for ALL potential employees and volunteers regardless of their recruited role into the company as well as a valid NDIS Worker Screening Check. All certification is kept on file and updated regularly when required.
3. Training- All staff will pass mandatory training for Responding to Risk of Harm Abuse and Neglect every 3 years, CPR refresher every 12 months and First aid training every 3 years, as per NDIS and our registering bodies guidelines. All Therabees staff will undertake continuous training, refresher, and development courses in relation to child protection and mandatory reporting to ensure Therabees always remains a child safe environment.

Code of Conduct

Therabees prides itself on the professionalism and the ability of its staff to meet participant and other stakeholder needs. The organisation strives to be a leading service provider and to provide a safe, healthy, and happy workplace.

Our Code of Conduct is designed to ensure that all staff, volunteers, stakeholders, parents / caregivers, children, and young people are treated in a manner that reflects Therabees' Mission, culture and legal obligations. All staff must be provided with and sign the Therabees Staff Code of Conduct, acknowledging their participation and acknowledgement of this policy, upon commencement with the company. Should Therabees, or people engaged by Therabees be found to have breached the NDIS / Therabees code of conduct or the Child Safe Environment policy, Therabees will comply with any education, compliance or enforcement action stipulated by the Department of Human Services and the NDIS commissioner.

Complaints / Concerns / Feedback

1. Any general complaints, concerns or feedback can be forwarded, in confidence, to the Director or the Practice Manager:
 - Gemma Hepburn - Director E: info@therabees.com.au
 - Cassandra Pocock - Practice Manager E: cassandra@therabees.com.au
2. The Director or Practice Manager will contact the client and arrange a suitable time either in person or over the telephone to discuss any concerns.
3. Appropriate action will be negotiated by both the client and Director / Practice Manager.
4. A formal complaints document will be completed and signed by both the client and Director/ Practice Manager and held on file for 5 years.

Risk Management

All staff, placements and volunteers engaged by Therabees are required to obtain and complete a "Participant Risk Management" form before undertaking any form of therapy with a child. This may also be in addition to an "Offsite Risk Management" form if appointments will not be undertaken within a Therabees clinic.

Identified Risk	Actions to minimise risk
Culture of organisation is not child-safe focussed	<p>Child focused Code of Conduct is in place that sets the behavioural standards expected including what happens when a breach occurs</p> <p>Culture of management reflects our strong commitment to the safety of children and young people</p> <p>The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations are embedded in policies and procedures</p> <p>We meet the requirements of the <i>Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017</i> (which mandates child safe environments) and the <i>Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016</i> (which mandates Working with Children Checks)</p>
Organisational staff (including employees, volunteers, students, contractors etc) do not understand their obligations to report harm and risk of harm to the Child Abuse Report Line (or SA Police if child/young person is at immediate risk)	<p>All organisational staff trained in Safe Environments – Through their Eyes on commencement and refresher training every 3 years after</p> <p>All organisational staff trained in Responding to Risk of Harm and Neglect – Education and Care on commencement and refresher training every 3 years after</p> <p>Management staff are required to review the Child Safe Environment risk assessment template on a quarterly basis to ensure compliance and to implement strategies to minimise and manage any potential risks. Any identified risks will be actioned immediately as a priority.</p> <p>All organisational staff must abide by the child safe environments policy and Code of Conduct (latter is signed on commencement with organisation)</p>
Physical contact	<p>Any physical contact must be appropriate to the delivery of services being provided</p> <p>Where physical contact is required, this is undertaken in a safe way by explaining why contact is required and what will happen, and asking the child/young person for their permission (or their family if this is more appropriate) before proceeding</p> <p>Unnecessary physical contact is not allowed</p>
Online communications	<p>Cyber safety and social media guidelines are in place and provided to all organisational staff</p> <p>Appropriate supervision is provided for all online activities</p> <p>Organisational staff must not communicate with children or young people via social media</p>
Taking images of children and young people	<p>A media release consent must be signed by the parent / caregiver, giving their acknowledgement and consent of the children or young people in their care to be photographed and/or videoed for education and/or marketing purposes.</p> <p>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</p> <p>Images must be presented in a way that de-identifies the child or young person</p>
Physical environment	<p>Maintain a risk register that is reviewed monthly to ensure effectiveness</p> <p>Conduct risk assessments for all activities</p> <p>Ensure all equipment is in good working order</p>
Privacy and confidentiality	<p>All documents containing confidential information will be stored privately in a locked filing cabinet (or similar place with restricted access)</p> <p>Digital files containing confidential information shall be protected electronically by restricting the access to only those requiring it to perform their duties</p> <p>Organisational staff must not disclose information regarding any child or young person without written consent of the child, young person, and their parent/guardian</p>

Mandated Reporters and Reporting

All employees and volunteers of Therabees are mandated reporters and adhere to the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017.

A mandated notifier is required by law to notify the Department for Child Protection if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is, or may be, at risk of harm. This obligation arises when a mandated notifier forms this suspicion in the course of their employment (whether paid or voluntary).

A mandated notifier must make the notification as soon as is reasonably practicable after forming the suspicion. The person who identifies the harm is the person to make the report.

To make a report, call the Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78 or in there is an immediate risk, call SA Police on 000.

All staff are trained, are aware and have access to the assessment framework set in place to protect children and families when harm has occurred.

Communication

We will hold regular information sessions for staff, volunteers, and students.

Our policy will be discussed during induction sessions for all new staff, volunteers, and students.

Children and parents joining our program/s will receive a copy of the Policy, Code of Conduct and Dealing with Complaints Process.

Review

As per the Children and Young People (Safety) Act (s.115), a new compliance statement lodgement is required with the Department of Human Services each time the policy is reviewed / updated. The policy and guidelines will be reviewed every five years and incorporate comments and suggestions from children and young people, parents, staff, volunteers, and students.

A copy of this policy can also be found on our website: www.therabees.com.au

Acknowledgment of Policy

All current employees of Therabees will follow and adhere to the above Child Safe Environment policy. Any concerns must be addressed with the Practice Manager or Director immediately.

Policy Name	Child Safe Environment Policy
Version #	1
Revision Date	May 8, 2028
Signed by staff member	Sign: _____ Name: _____
Signed Date	