

1.5.5 Zero Tolerance Policy and Procedure

1.5.5.1 Purpose

We are committed to meeting the requirements of the Disability Abuse Prevention Strategy and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. We will always endeavour to understand, promote and enhance safeguards to prevent abuse, harm and risk of harm from occurring to all participants.

1.5.5.2 Scope

This policy is relevant to all staff, volunteers, or stakeholders.

1.5.5.3 Definition

Term	Definition
Zero tolerance	<p>It aims to provide an evidence-based, nationally applicable, and contemporary approach to preventing and responding to abuse, harm and risk of harm of people with disabilities.</p> <p>The aim is to assist service providers in developing positive organisational cultures and practices and robust safeguarding mechanisms relevant to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).</p> <p>Zero tolerance applies to participants regardless of age.</p>

1.5.5.4 Policy

Nepean Centre is committed to all elements of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Code of Conduct and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. Nepean Centre will train staff in all areas of the NDIS Code of Conduct to ensure a zero-tolerance approach is adhered to across all practices.

To follow the Code and guidelines, we will:

- refuse to tolerate any form of harm, risk of harm or abuse towards people with disabilities, children and young people by workers or other people with disabilities, and promotes zero tolerance for abuse.
- provide staff with training and information to correctly apply the obligations of the NDIS Code of Conduct and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- assist staff in undertaking their role, e.g., keeping support plans up-to-date; provide training opportunities which will include mandated reporter training, formal training, mentoring and on-the-job supervision.
- report all cases of harm, risk of harm, abuse, or suspected abuse.
- agree never to take adverse action against any staff member or volunteer if they report harm, risk of harm, abuse, or neglect.
- base all necessary disciplinary actions on the principle of procedural fairness if a staff member violates the obligations of the NDIS Code of Conduct.
- respect and value the diversity of people and cultures to create an inclusive environment where it is safe for people with disabilities to express their cultural identity.
- actively maintain a working environment that minimises the risks of abuse, harm, or risk of harm.
- create and maintain a positive complaints culture where people, children and young people are not afraid to speak up.
- foster a culture of zero tolerance for harm, risk of harm or abuse towards people with disabilities, children, and young people.

Nepean Centre informs their front-line staff (who impose the obligations) that they must:

- provide services without engaging in abuse, exploitation, harassment, or neglect.
- report any form of harm, risk of harm, abuse, or suspected abuse (e.g., mandatory notification/report for children and young people).
- never engage in sexual abuse or misconduct and report any such conduct by other workers, participants, family members, carers, or community members.
- show respect for cultural differences when providing services.
- act ethically, with integrity, honesty, and transparency.

1.5.5.5 Procedure

Nepean Centre will train staff to understand and act on a zero-tolerance approach and their mandatory reporting role and ensure that staff appreciate participants are people first, with needs, aspirations, preferences, and feelings.

All staff must listen to participants to determine their preferences, aspirations, needs, and supports (where it is safe).

Nepean Centre will ensure that staff are informed that people with disabilities, children and young people tend to face significantly higher risks of sexual assault and exploitation than the general population. This fact is particularly true for women with a disability. Also, disclosure barriers make it difficult for a person with a disability to report sexual abuse and misconduct. Staff must be sensitive to the symptoms and causes of various types of abuse that affect all participants, including children and young people (see Working with Children Policy and Procedure).

1.5.5.5.1 Reporting abuse or harm

Nepean Centre acknowledges that reporting harm, risk of harm or abuse is critical to prevent abusive or harmful situations from escalating and recurring among participants.

Nepean Centre staff who work with participants will report any harm and abuse (zero tolerance) following the reporting procedures outlined in the Violence, Harm, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination Policy and Procedure or Working with Children Policy and Procedure. Staff will refer to the reporting procedures outlined in the Reportable Incident, Accident and Emergency Policy and Procedure when reporting a reportable incident, noting that all real or potential harm or abuse is reportable.

1.5.5.6 Related documents

- Child and Young People Handbook
- Code of Conduct Agreement
- Incident Investigation Form
- Incident Register
- Incident Report
- Participant Notes
- Risk Assessment Form
- Risk Management Plan Register
- Staff Training Record
- Staff Training Plan
- Training Attendance Register – In-house
- Training Register
- Violence, Harm, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination Policy and Procedure
- Reportable Incident, Accident and Emergency Policy and Procedure
- Working with Children Policy and Procedure

1.5.5.7 References

- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2021
- National Standards for
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)
- Disability Services Act 1986 (Commonwealth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)