

# CHILD SAFETY POLICY

**Keep Growing Counselling (ABN 66 291 395 369) ("Organisation")**

***Effective date: 11th September 2023***

## **(1) PUPOSE OF THIS POLICY**

*At Keep Growing Counselling (we, our, us), we are committed to providing an environment which is safe for children and youths, and to ensuring that this is reflected in all aspects of our business operations.*

*This Child Safety Policy (Policy) sets out the general principles that guide the management of child and youth safety at Keep Growing Counselling.*

*We have developed this Policy to help our Workers understand and manage child and youth safety, and to set a framework to ensure that we provide a safe environment for children and young people, and that we meet all of our objectives and comply with all of our legal and regulatory obligations in relation to these matters.*

## **(2) STATUS OF THIS POLICY**

This Policy does not form part of any contract of employment or any other contract for work or services.

## **(3) APPLICABLE RULES**

(a) We are committed to complying with all applicable laws and regulations as well as codes of practice and other safety guidance in all jurisdictions where we operate. This may include the following Australian laws:

- *Family Law Act 1975 (Commonwealth)*
- *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)*
- *Children Youth and Families Act 2005 (VIC)*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (VIC)*
- *Child Protection Act 1999 (QLD)*
- *Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA)*
- *Family Court Act 1997 (WA)*
- *Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012*
- *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)*
- *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 (TAS)*
- *Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)*
- *Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 (NT)*

(b) This may also include any laws which apply in the jurisdictions outside Australia where we operate.

(c) This may also include the following external policies, standards, codes of practice or safety guidance:

Child Safety Standards (NSW)  
Child Safety Standards (VIC)  
Australian Counselling Association Code & Ethics (Australia)

#### **(4) NATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR CHILD SAFE ORGANISATIONS**

(a) We support the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations* (National Principles) and will endeavour to embrace them at our Organisation.

(b) The National Principles require that:

- 1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.*
- 2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.*
- 3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.*
- 4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.*
- 5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.*
- 6. Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.*
- 7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.*
- 8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.*
- 9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.*
- 10. Policies and procedures document how the Organisation is safe for children and young people.*

#### **(5) APPLICATION OF POLICY**

(a) This Policy applies to any people who perform work for Keep Growing Counselling, including all our directors, managers, board members, employees, contractors, subcontractors, employees of our contractors and subcontractors, apprentices, trainees, volunteers, interns, work experience students, labour hire employees and outworkers and any other people who perform work for or on behalf of our Organisation (Workers).

(b) We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all Workers and visitors to our Organisation. However, this Policy specifically addresses our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of youths and children at our Organisation. Throughout this Policy, we use the terms "youth", "young person", "child" and "children" to refer generally to people under 18 years of age.

(c) This Policy applies to all activities in our Organisation which involve children, or which result in or relate to contact with children.

(d) This Policy is intended to help manage the safety and wellbeing of any children that come into contact with our Organisation, whether they are receiving services from us, are the children of someone who is receiving services from us, are the children of our Workers, or come into contact with us in any other way.

## **(6) OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY**

(a) Safeguarding children from harm and abuse is an essential responsibility for our Organisation. We are committed to ensuring that any child who comes into contact with our Organisation or services is properly safeguarded. Every person under this policy must ensure that they play an active role in ensuring that children are properly safeguarded.

(b) We believe that no child or young person should experience abuse or harm and we are committed to the protection of children and young people. This policy is intended to provide guidance and overarching principles to those who represent us as volunteers or staff, to guide our approach to child protection and safeguarding.

(c) It is our intention that a child safe culture should be embedded in all levels of our Organisation, including but not limited to our leadership and governance as well as amongst all of our other Workers.

(d) When dealing with concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing, we are guided by a consideration of what is in the best interests of the child.

(e) We strive to:

- ensure that our Workers have the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe
- ensure that any of our Workers who work with children have the necessary skills, attributes, experience and qualifications to uphold this Policy and provide the support and supervision that children require
- ensure that any children who come into contact with our Organisation and who have concerns about their safety or need assistance know where to go and who to talk to
- ensure that any children who come into contact with our Organisation and who have concerns about their safety feel comfortable seeking assistance

- maintain the safety and security of any of our facilities or environments which may be accessed by children (including any online facilities or environments, websites or platforms)
- promote a workplace which values diversity and inclusion
- where appropriate, involve children and their families in decisions that affect them
- promote a culture of child safety at all levels in our Organisation
- take any allegations or complaints in relation to child safety seriously, and respond promptly and appropriately
- report any allegations or concerns to relevant authorities whenever appropriate or necessary

## **(7) GENERAL WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES**

(a) Our Workers must uphold our Organisation's values in accordance with this Policy. Our Workers must demonstrate behaviour which is consistent with this Policy and with our Organisation's values. Our Workers must be proactive about upholding and promoting our values and this Policy, including by doing the following:

- remaining alert and aware of possible safeguarding risks to children
- guarding children against harmful environments with appropriate actions (for example, adequate supervision or ensuring safe environments)
- taking positive steps to maintain the safety and wellbeing of children engaging with our Organisation
- reporting concerns expeditiously and appropriately, in line with child protection procedures
- understanding the duty to report specific concerns (and understanding how this interplays with confidentiality)
- challenging any inappropriate or harmful behaviour of any other adult and reporting this accordingly
- acting appropriately in the presence of children
- not taking any inappropriate risks
- not smoking, drinking or taking any form of illicit substances in the presence of children
- ensuring that any children who come into contact with our Organisation or access our services understand their rights and responsibilities

- communicating with children clearly and respectfully and using language which they can understand and which is appropriate for their age and level of development

- ensuring that any children who come into contact with our Organisation or access our services are supported and get any necessary assistance with exercising their rights and responsibilities

(b) Our Workers are responsible for ensuring that they personally comply with all applicable laws in the state or territory where they are based including any applicable Commonwealth laws.

## **(8) RESPONSIBLE PERSON**

Any question, report or concern in relation to the safeguarding of children should be shared with the following person (Responsible Person):

Name: SARAH FLORENZE

Email: [keepgrowingcounselling@outlook.com](mailto:keepgrowingcounselling@outlook.com)

Telephone: 0491 037 465

## **(9) THE RISKS TO CHILDREN**

(a) Children can be vulnerable to different forms of abuse and harm. It is important to recognise that abuse and harm of children can cover a wide range of circumstances and behaviours. For example, children can be at risk of:

- physical or emotional abuse
- neglect
- sexual abuse
- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- grooming and exploitation
- trafficking and modern slavery
- exposure to or infliction of domestic abuse
- bullying or cyber bullying
- exposure to other inappropriate content or behaviour, such as violence or criminal behaviour
- self-harm
- physical harm when engaging with activities without adequate supervision

(b) The causal factors of any such harm and/or abuse can also be wide-ranging. For example, children can be placed at risk by family members or by members of the community.

## **(10) TAKING CHILD PARTICIPATION SERIOUSLY**

(a) We strive to ensure that children who come into contact with our Organisation or our services are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them, and are taken seriously.

(b) We use the following strategies to ensure that children have their rights respected, participate in decision-making and have their voices heard:

Keep Growing Counselling is committed to working alongside all clients to ensure that their voice is heard, respected and at the forefront of positive and harmonious counselling interactions, procedures, and therapies within the clinic/session at all times.

## **(11) ENGAGING WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES**

(a) We encourage our Workers, when engaging with children, to involve the families of those children whenever it is appropriate, and provided that doing so will not compromise the safety of the child.

(b) When doing this, our Workers should keep in mind that in some cases, children can be placed at risk by family members or by members of the community, so involving the child's family could expose the child to additional risk.

## **(12) RESPECTING EQUITY AND DIVERSITY**

We strive to create an environment where children and young people's diverse needs and circumstances are recognised and all children feel safe, welcome and included.

## **(13) ENSURING STAFF ARE SUITABLE AND SUPPORTED**

We strive to ensure that Workers at our Organisation who are working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice. We use a variety of procedures relating to recruitment, staff development, screening, induction and supervision to do this.

## **(14) CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION**

All personal information we may process relating to children, shall be processed and stored in accordance with our data protection privacy policy which can be located at: [keepgrowingcounselling/policyandagreements](https://keepgrowingcounselling.com/policyandagreements).

## **(15) RESPONDING TO A CHILD SAFETY CONCERN**

(a) We aim to provide accessible and responsive complaints management processes that are focused on the needs of children and young people. We do this in the following manner:

Complaints to Keep Growing Counselling will endeavor to be responded within 7 days. After that period, I may contact you to request further information. Upon discussions, Keep Growing Counselling will attempt to provide a reasonable resolution. In any case, I aim to review, and respond and resolve to all complaints within 21 days.

## **(16) STAFF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND AWARENESS**

We use a variety of measures to ensure that staff and volunteers are provided with relevant knowledge, skills and awareness on an ongoing basis to keep children safe.

## **(17) SAFE PHYSICAL AND ONLINE ENVIRONMENTS**

We believe in promoting child safety and wellbeing in physical and online environments in order to reduce the risk of harm. We use a variety of measures to ensure that our physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

## **(18) SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AT THE ORGANISATION**

### **Responsibilities and Planning**

(a) Although the Responsible Person will hold ultimate responsibility for overseeing the safety of children present at the Organisation, all individuals under this policy must also play an active role in ensuring the safety of children at all times.

(b) Where a certain type of events, activity or trip is taking place, we may issue an additional code of conduct, policy, or some specific other requirements which is specific to that occasion. Any such additional documentation will be made available to all those concerned (staff members, parents, guardians etc.) in advance. They should be read carefully and adhered to.

(c) Appropriate background checking shall be undertaken wherever we are legally required to do so in respect of adults who are engaged by us (see the relevant section above).

### **Venues**

(a) We are typically based at:

The Clinic  
4/18 Manning Street,  
KIAMA 2533 NSW

(b) We have carried out a health and safety risk assessment in relation to the premises, in reference to its safety and suitability for children. Where any events, activities or trips are to take place at other locations, we shall also carry out a further risk assessment.

(c) The fire safety procedure in relation to the premises can be found in the following location:

Within the Clinic at 4/18 Manning Street KIAMA 2533

### **First Aid**

(a) If an ambulance is required, call 000. Please notify a manager or supervisor if an ambulance has been called.

(b) Any accident or injury concerning a child should be brought to the attention of the nearest first aider and should thereafter be formally reported to the Responsible Person.

### **Consent Forms**

(a) We shall always obtain written consent from a parent or guardian in the following circumstances:

when a 'walk and talk' session is required, off site for therapeutic reasons. The location and timeframe will be agreed upon, with parental consent.

(b) Consent will be obtained via:

via online consent/through intake and service agreements or on occasion through written consent which will be made available at the clinic.

(c) Consent forms will include emergency contact details and will set out any specific safety needs/requirements for children.

(d) All consent forms will be kept secure and shall be stored in accordance with our data protection privacy policy.

### **Supervision**

(a) For most activities and events, our procedure for supervision of children is as follows:

For individual clients, aged between 5 and 18 years old, there shall be 1 adult present. For small group activities and social skill programs, children aged between 9 and 12, there shall be one adult present for every 8 children. For groups of children 13+ there will be one adult to every 10 children.

(b) Wherever a child attend our premises alongside their parent or guardian, parents and guardians should ensure that children are properly supervised.

## **(19) MANAGING BEHAVIOUR OF CHILDREN GENERALLY**

(a) Whenever any adult engaged by us is faced with challenging or inappropriate behaviour from a child or with conflict between children, they must:

- treat each child fairly and equally
- approach the situation in a calm and neutral manner
- only ever use physical restraint/intervention in order to protect the immediate safety of a person, for example to prevent an injury or harm either to the child or others
- wherever it is justified to physically restrain a child or to physically intervene, the amount of force used should be kept to the absolute minimum taking into account the risk posed
- make a written record of the incident and ensure this is reported appropriately to the Responsible Person

## **(20) PHOTOGRAPHY**

(a) We operate a strict no photo policy. We will not take any photographs and ask that members of the public, parents or guardians and children do not take any photographs when attending our premises, activities and/or events.

## **(21) REVIEWING OUR CHILD SAFE POLICIES AND PRACTICES**

We regularly review our child safe policies and practices so that we can continue to improve them.

## **(22) MAKING OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AVAILABLE**

(a) Our child safe policies and procedures (including this Policy) are available to view at any time.

(b) We strive to ensure that our child safe policies and procedures are understood by all Workers and relevant stakeholders.

(c) We strive to ensure that children who engage with our Organisation, as well as their families and relevant community members, are aware of and have confidence in our child safety policies and procedures.

(d) Please contact us for assistance with understanding or implementing any of the matters addressed in this Policy.

**(23) ADMINISTRATION OF THIS POLICY**

- (a) This Policy was approved by: Sarah Florenze
- (b) This Policy came into effect on: 11th September 2023
- (c) This Policy is due to be reviewed on: 11th September 2024
- (d) The following person is responsible for leading the review process for this Policy: Sarah Florenze

**(24) FURTHER INFORMATION**

We thank you for the time you have taken to review and consider this Policy. If you have further questions or want to discuss any matters in connection with this Policy, please direct all such communication to:

Sarah Florenze  
 Director & CEO of Keep Growing Counselling  
 keepgrowingcounselling@outlook.com

**(25) ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

By signing below, you acknowledge having read and understood this Policy, and you agree to comply with this Policy:

.....  
*Signature*

.....  
*Name*

.....  
*Date*