

Safeguarding Practice and Behaviour Requirements of Staff



Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this statement is to make clear the practices and behaviours required of all staff, volunteers, students and contractors to comply with the commitment of Parkerville Children and Youth Care Inc. (Parkerville CYC) to be a child safe organisation.

Parkerville CYC is committed to safeguarding children and young people in our care and to ensuring they feel safe and are safe. The organisation's expectation is that all staff, volunteers and students will strive for the highest possible standards with respect to safeguarding children and young people from abuse. By clarifying the practices and behaviours required of staff, volunteers and students the organisation's intention is to prevent or reduce the occurrence of behaviours that may be harmful to children and young people.

The Safeguarding Practice and Behaviour Requirements of Staff are to be read in conjunction with:

- the specific requirements of the employee/volunteer's job description
- the Safeguarding Children and Young People policy
- the Managing Disclosures and Allegations of Abuse process
- the Staff Code of Conduct
- other relevant process documentation referred to in this statement.

The term "staff" is used throughout this document and should be taken to refer to employees, volunteers, students and contractors. All staff required to adhere to these Practice and Behaviour Requirements of Staff. Any breaches are to be reported using the organisation's incident reporting process.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all staff to comply and ensure compliance with the Safeguarding Practice and Behaviour Requirements of Staff.

For managers, this responsibility includes providing staff with necessary guidance and training about these requirements and arranging or providing appropriate supervision.

Staff are to be provided with and required to sign a copy of this statement to confirm their understanding of and commitment to the requirements of the statement.

Failure to comply with the requirements of this statement may be considered as misconduct and, if so, will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. In addition to any internal disciplinary proceedings, referral to the appropriate external body/bodies will be made as required by law.

It is the responsibility of the Child Safe Coordinator to record any breaches of the Safeguarding Practice and Behaviour Requirements on a central register and report this information to the Chief Executive. The information on this register will be used to report to the Australian Childhood Foundation as part of the ongoing accreditation requirements.

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It is the responsibility of the Quality Manager to ensure the Practice and Behaviour Requirements of Staff are reviewed, updated and current as part of a system review process.

Requirements of staff

1.0 Sexual behaviour and material

Staff must ensure that under no circumstances is any form of sexual behaviour to occur between, with or in the presence of, children or young people involved with the organisation.

Staff must take actions to ensure that children and young people are not exposed to pornographic material (e.g. movies, magazines, internet).

2.0 Behaviour management

Staff are required to use a therapeutic approach in all their interactions with children and young people. This approach must be in line with the Therapeutic Model of Care framework and be grounded in the concepts from the Circle of Security model. Staff will strive to ensure that children and young people participating in Parkerville CYC programmes are aware of the acceptable limits of their behaviour and its impact upon the experience for other clients. A multi-disciplinary team will develop an individual therapeutic care plan for a child or young person to ensure the behaviours are responded to by staff in a therapeutic way. It is recognised that staff may be required to use appropriate techniques and behaviour management strategies to ensure:

- an effective and positive environment
- the safety and /or wellbeing of children and staff participating in the service.

Under no circumstances are Parkerville CYC staff to take disciplinary action involving physical punishment or any form of treatment that could reasonably be considered degrading, cruel, frightening or humiliating.

3.0 Use of language and tone of voice

Language and tone of voice used in the presence of children and young people should:

- provide clear direction, encourage or affirm them
- not be harmful to children/young people. This involves avoiding language that is:
 - discriminatory, racist or sexist
 - derogatory, name calling or negative labelling
 - intended to threaten or frighten
 - profane or sexual

4.0 Supervision of Children and Young People

Staff are responsible for supervising the children and young people that are participating in Parkerville CYC programmes. In some programmes, parents or other professionals may participate in a supervisory role. In such cases, it is the responsibility of the relevant Parkerville CYC staff member to ensure that the supervisory arrangements implemented are safe for the children or young people concerned.

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Close monitoring and supervision of children and young people is required to ensure they:

- engage positively with staff
- behave appropriately towards each other and within a peer setting
- are in a safe environment and are protected from external threats like traffic, strangers, etc.
- are under the supervision of their approved staff member/s. Delegation of the supervision responsibility to any non-approved person i.e. friends, neighbours, family is not permitted
- are being supervised in line with their developmental needs and care plan goals.

Where contract personnel e.g. maintenance contractors are involved in work on Parkerville CYC premises, it is the responsibility of the relevant staff member to ensure that children and young people are supervised at all times and not permitted unsupervised interaction with the contract employee.

5.0 Use of electronic communication

Children and young people in the care of Parkerville CYC must be monitored by staff when using electronic communication equipment to ensure that they do not inadvertently place themselves at risk of abuse or exploitation via social networking sites, gaming sites or through web searches or inappropriate emails.

Staff must ensure that children and young people do not watch movies or play video games that are not recommended for their age group

6.0 Giving Gifts to Children and Young People

Each year Parkerville CYC provides Christmas gifts to each client residing in Parkerville CYC's Out of Home Care (OHC) Services and some clients accessing programmes in the Therapeutic Services directorate. Birthday gifts and leaving-care gifts are also provided to clients accessing OHC services and in other programmes under certain conditions i.e. homeless youth. These gifts have usually been donated by supporters of Parkerville CYC and are allocated and distributed as per the process outlined in the Marketing and Communication process manual.

Outside of the process stated above, staff are not permitted to give gifts/prizes/rewards to children or young people that participate in Parkerville CYC programmes/services. Exceptions to this may apply if the line manager pre-approves the gift giving and is clear on the purpose of such an action e.g. care plan goal, programme reward, crisis intervention to meet basic human needs or for a planned event. Parents, carers, guardians and other responsible adults must give consent and be aware of any gift giving to children or young people by staff.

7.0 Photographs of children and young people

Photographs of young people under the care of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Department for Child Protection and Family Support (CPFS) are taken for the purpose of their life stories and identification purposes in the case of absconding. Children and young people must be appropriately dressed and posed in all photographs.

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Photographs may be taken at events organised or attended by Parkerville CYC clients. Photographs or other images may not be used or published without prior consent being obtained.

Photographs of children (Parkerville CYC clients) must only be taken using Parkerville CYC equipment/ devices unless it is authorised by the relevant Director that other equipment is permitted e.g. external photographer.

Parkerville CYC staff, students and volunteers are not permitted to take photographs of children using personal mobile devices or equipment.

Images are not to be distributed (including as an email attachment, published on Facebook, Websites etc.) to anyone outside Parkerville CYC other than the child's parent or legal guardian without approval from the Director or Chief Executive or unless stated in the programme process manual.

Images, either digital or hard copy, are to be stored securely. Digital photos must be securely stored in the child's folder and deleted from devices. Hard copy photos must be kept in a locked drawer or cabinet.

8.0 Physical contact with children and young people

Staff must ensure that any physical contact with children and young people is appropriate in relation to the service being provided and based on the needs of the child or young person - not the needs of the staff.

Staff are required to report to management any physical contact initiated by a child or young person that is of a sexual nature or inappropriate.

Under no circumstance should staff have contact with children or young people participating in a Parkerville CYC service that:

- involves touching of genitals, buttocks or the breast area except when delivering required medical treatment or allied health services or assisting with developmentally appropriate toileting
- is intended to cause pain or distress to the child or young person
- is overly physical i.e. wrestling, horseplay, tickling or other roughhousing
- is unnecessary or age inappropriate e.g. assisting with toileting or the administration of medical treatments when the child/young person does not require assistance
- is initiated against the wishes of the child or young person - except when preventing a child or young person or other person from immediate injury or serious harm.

Staff are required to report any concerns regarding physical contact of staff and children and young people immediately using the incident reporting process as outlined in the Standard of Care process manual.

9.0 Communicating and Contact with clients

Staff must maintain a professional relationship with clear boundaries with the children, young people and families at all times. Staff must adhere to the following practice:

- staff must not provide personal contact details or contact numbers of residences to family members of children in OHC
- staff must not seek contact with children or young people (or former clients) outside of the service delivery
- staff must not accept an invitation to attend any private social function at the request of the child or young person unless in the role as carer and approved by line manager
- current and past staff should not engage in any social media contact i.e. twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn etc., with current or former children or young people who are in, or have been in the care of Parkerville CYC without the express permission of the Chief Executive

10.0 Overnights stays, sleeping arrangements in Out of Home Care

- For children under the care of the Department for Child Protection and Family Services, prior authorisation is required for overnight stays at non approved locations.
- Foster carers can give consent for everyday activities, such as sleepovers at a friend's house, school excursions and activities
- Consent from the Department for Child Protection and Family Services is required in situations of potential increased risk to the child, such as: regular overnight stays at other people's homes; interstate and overseas travel; and high risk activities that require a waiver of legal liability, such as attending school excursions where high risk activities will be undertaken
- When children in Out of Home Care have friends sleep over, the practices and behaviour by staff/volunteers/foster carers must be consistent with the practices and behaviours expected during delivery of the Out of Home Care Programme at other times. This includes observing appropriate dress standards for adults and the children
- Staff must not expose children and young people to sleeping arrangements that may compromise their safety such as: sharing a bed with an adult; visits to the homes of unknown people: children or young people sharing a bed (except where the care team has determined it is culturally appropriate and documented in the care plan).
- Arrangements must be made to ensure children and young people have the opportunity to contact their Team Leader or On-Call Team Leader if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable with the sleeping arrangements for an overnight stay.

11.0 Change room arrangements

Staff are required to supervise children and young people while in change rooms while also taking into consideration their right to privacy. Staff must adhere to the following practices:

- staff are not permitted to undress or use the change room while children and young people are present
- children and young people must be supervised while they are in public change rooms
- staff are responsible for ensuring that children and young people are protected from abuse by members of the public, other service users (both peers and adults) while using the change room

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- female staff/volunteers/students are not to enter a male change room and men are not to enter a female change room
- staff must ensure children and young people have privacy for bathing and dressing that is age appropriate.

12.0 Responding to sexually active children and young people

If a staff member, volunteer or student becomes aware of a child or young person involved in sexual activity or considering sexual activity they must:

- report the information to their line manager before making any decisions about what to do next
- refer to the Managing Disclosures and Allegations of Abuse process in the Standard of Care process manual to determine the most appropriate action to take e.g. report to CPFS and/or WAPOL.

13.0 Use, possession or supply of alcohol or drugs

Staff must ensure they are fully capable of performing their duties at all times and, whilst on duty or otherwise in the presence of children or young people in the care of the organisation, must not:

- use, possess or be under the influence of illegal drugs
- be intoxicated or incapacitated under the influence of alcohol
- be incapacitated by any other legal drug such as prescription or over the counter drugs
- supply alcohol or drugs (including tobacco) to children and young people
- smoke in the presence of children and young people
- smoke in ParkervilleCYC vehicles or on a Parkerville CYC site. If a staff member does take a cigarette break away from the children, it is their responsibility to ensure the children/young people in their care are supervised appropriately.

14.0 Transporting children and young people

Programmes that provide regular transportation to children and young people will be provided with vehicles from the Parkerville CYC fleet. The purpose for which a staff member is transporting a child or young person in a vehicle must be in line with the programme objectives and communicated to other team members with clear timeframes around journey and return time.

On occasion, a staff member may be required to use their personal car for work purposes. This is only to be considered as a last resort and must be approved by the relevant line manager. The vehicle must be roadworthy and have a current vehicle registration and its use must comply with the Motor Vehicle Usage process in the Finance and Payroll process manual.

Purposes for the transportation of children and young people include, but are not limited to:

- school
- activities/sport/recreation
- medical appointments
- other activities in line with care plan goals.

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For any travel intrastate or interstate or international, approval must be sought from the legal guardian i.e. parent or Department for Child Protection and Family Support. Any transport over water of a child or young person in the care of the Department for Child Protection and Family Support must be pre-approved

Reporting, Monitoring and Review

All staff, volunteers and students must report any breaches of the Safeguarding Practice and Behaviour Requirements of Staff to their line manager as part of the incident report process. They must also complete an incident report and forwarded it through the appropriate channel as outlined in the incident reporting process in the Standard of Care manual.

If the staff member, volunteer or student has a concern that is not considered an incident and they are unsure of whom to report the concern to, they should report their concerns to the Child Safe Coordinator or another member of the Quality team. The person receiving the concern will communicate the information to the Child Safe Coordinator and appropriate line manager for resolution. The Child Safe Coordinator will record the concern on the Safeguarding Children register. Feedback on the outcome of the reported concern will be provided to the person that raised the concern by the Child Safe Coordinator.

The information will be collated and reported to Senior Management Group on a 6 monthly basis.

The Safeguarding Children Practice and Behaviour Requirements of Staff process will be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the Parkerville CYC system reviews.

15.0 References

<http://manuals.dcp.wa.gov.au/manuals/cpm/Pages/08SexuallyActiveYoungPeople.aspx>