

KID SENSE CHILD DEVELOPMENT

CHILD SAFE POLICY

Date of policy: 10/02/2023

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Wheel of Child Safety

Reference - <https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles>

Kid Sense Child Development Child Safe Policy & Procedure

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This policy is applied by all Kid Sense staff at all Kid Sense Sites.

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Warning	This process is uncontrolled when printed. The current version of this document is available on the Kid Sense Child Development Sharepoint.			

1. PURPOSE

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of Kid Sense Child Development to Children and young person Safety and Wellbeing. Our service has a legal and ethical responsibility to provide and maintain a child and young person's safe and friendly environment where all children and young people are respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. The policy will outline the roles and responsibilities for everyone involved in the organisation (and applied to all Kid Sense Child Development staff).

2. COMMITMENT TO THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

National Principles 1-10

All children and young people who come to Kid Sense have a right to feel and be safe. Everyone within our organisation has a role to play in ensuring a safe environment for children and young people. This includes all levels within the Kid Sense Group, from Board and Executive Management through to Therapy and Operational Staff.

We are committed to ensure that children and young people are valued, respected and encouraged to participate and that the safety and protection of children and young people is always our first priority. Our 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.

As part of our public commitment to Child Safety we have a copy of this Child Safety Policy and our Child Safe Code of Conduct located on our website.

Kid Sense includes this Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct as a mandate in our induction process whereby staff are required to read and acknowledge their understanding of both Kid Sense requirements and their role within the framework.

We are committed to diversity, where all children and young people are embraced regardless of their abilities, sex, gender or social economic or cultural background, and equity is always upheld.

At Kid Sense, bullying and harassment will not be tolerated, where we have signs in our waiting rooms that we have 'zero tolerance' to aggressive behaviour. We also display information about services that can assist children and young people, including the Kids Helpline (on 1800 55 1800), the Kids helpline wallet cards, 24/7 mental health supports for parents and kids, and in our waiting rooms.

Kid Sense recognises that all children and young people may have diverse backgrounds and circumstances. Equity is upheld and Diversity needs are respected and supported in our policy and practice.

Clients of Kid Sense are encouraged to advise our team of any cultural needs or diverse circumstances during their initial assessment phase, in their individual risk assessment (yearly), and at any time during their ongoing treatment sessions.

Our team understands the importance of documenting these needs in our client management system to ensure that all team members are aware of the client's ongoing needs and can

provide an environment where children and young people are empowered and can participate more effectively.

Kid Sense aims to build an organisation that embraces all children and young people regardless of their abilities, sex, gender, or social, economic or cultural background.

3. SCOPE OF POLICY

National Principles 1-10

For the purposes of this policy “Kid Sense” and “we” refers to Kid Sense Child Development Pty Ltd and all its business units and sites.

This policy applies to children, young people, families, staff (all employees), management, contractors, students, and visitors to our business.

All of our employees are required to review this policy and agree to accept and act in accordance with this policy, via their sign off on this in the *Employee Handbook*.

4. DEFINITIONS

Child or young person- persons under 18 years of age.

Complainant- person who makes a complaint.

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.

National Police Check- a summary of an individual’s offender history in Australia and a record of their criminal history relating to convictions, finding of guilt or pending court proceedings. They are available from South Australia Police (SAPOL) or organisations accredited by the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission. It is an organisational decision if a National Police Certificate (NPC) is required for workers or volunteers, however the organisation can no longer use the NPC to assess if a person is suitable to work or volunteer with children in South Australia, this must be determined by a valid, not prohibited Working with Children Check (WWCC).

Working with Children Check- People working or volunteering with children in South Australia must, by law, have a valid, not prohibited Working with Children Check. A Working with Children Check is an assessment of whether a person poses an unacceptable risk to children. As part of the process, the Screening Unit will look at criminal history, child protection information and other information.

5. COMMUNICATION

National Principle 2 and 3

Kid Sense provides access to our Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct publically on our website and through other internal platforms. It is available to children, young people and families through our website and on request, as well as through their welcome pack.

Kid Sense child safe policy is available to all employees where they sign off on this at the beginning of their employment, through the *Employee Handbook*. It is also available to any contractors or students. We will ensure that each staff member has read this policy and adheres to this policy.

6. PARTICIPATION OF FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

National Principle 2 and 3

Kid Sense encourages and respects the views of children and young people who access our services.

Due to the nature of our work, the entire Kid Sense Team value and respect children and young people's identity and culture, and are comfortable in engaging with them.

Kid Sense staff listen to and act upon any concerns that children, young people or their families raise with us. We conduct Annual Feedback Surveys to all current clients of Kid Sense. We dedicate part of our Annual Feedback Survey to Child Safe Policy, Code of Conduct, and seek feedback from families. Annual Feedback Surveys are available as printed hard-copies at our sites during the survey period.

Information about our Complaints and Feedback process is available at each site with clear guidance on how to lodge feedback to Kid Sense. Each waiting room has a system that families, children or young people can fill out in regards to feedback, and be able to provide this anonymously if they wish. This is also available on the Kid Sense website, with links provided at the bottom of each invoice.

Our therapy team can provide clear age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate explanations to children and young people, and allow for questions during consultation and treatment. We involve children and young people in decision-making as and where appropriate. All families are involved in the assessment process of the child or young person, and in relation to goal setting for therapy sessions. All families 'sign off' on agreed upon goals for therapy.

Kid Sense provides access to resources for our therapy team to utilise that enables them to educate children and young people on their rights including their right to safety and right to be listened to.

Kid Sense listens to children and young people and encourage them to be involved and informed about their rights, understand what child safety and wellbeing means, and provide feedback including raising complaints and concerns.

7. CODE OF CONDUCT

National Principles 4 and 6

Kid Sense has a Child Safe Code of Conduct which applies to all staff that work or are onsite at Kid Sense. It is located in both the employee handbook, which is available to all staff and gets signed off by each staff member at induction, on our website and on SharePoint, to be available to view at all times.

All Kid Sense staff are versed in how to respond to manage complaints, and such to appropriately respond to a breach of the code of conduct. Staff, carers as well as children and young people, can report a breach of conduct at any time by:

- Speaking to any staff member
- Completing the written complaint form available physically in the waiting room of all clinics.
- Completing the written complaint form electronically on the website (this link is provided in each and every receipt)

Should any staff member be reported/observed to have breached the code of conduct, the alleged breach is investigated by the management team.

If the staff member is found to have *knowingly/intentionally* breached the code of conduct, their employment will be ceased or put on review/ management, and/ or their role altered. If they are found to unintentionally have breached the code of conduct, education is provided and performance monitoring undertaken.

Refer to our 'Code of Conduct' document.

8. RECRUITMENT

National Principle 5

Kid Sense has a clear process for all recruitment, to ensure we can maintain a child safe environment, and only employ the most suitable staff to work with children and young people. This includes:

- Having clear position descriptions which outline the requirements and values they will need to meet
- Our Job Descriptions reference our Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct
- Face-to-face interviews (or via video if needed)
- Verifying all staff that are offered a position have a current, not prohibited, Working with Children Check and NDIS Worker Screening Check
- Completing 1-2 referee checks
- Where possible, completing an observation session with any potential employee to see that they engage in an appropriate way with children and young people.

Kid Sense uses the *Employment Hero* HR platform for each staff member to store their current DCSI working with children clearances, which means management are notified before any check is expired. This helps ensure that all staff renew their Working with Children Check every 5 years and that their status remains as 'not prohibited'. Management are then able to verify this through the certificate the staff upload to *Employment Hero*, but also through the Organisation Portal accessed via the DHS Screening Unit. Therefore, Kid Sense meets the

requirement of the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016* which requires staff and volunteers to have a current, 'not prohibited' Working with Children Check by the DHS Screening Unit.

Kid Sense will advise the Screening Unit if and when 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.

All Kid Sense staff must also complete the mandatory NDIS online training via the NDIS Commission:

- Worker Orientation Module – Quality, Safety and You
- Supporting Effective Communication
- New Worker – NDIS Induction Module

9. SUPERVISION, TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES

National Principles 5 and 7

Kid Sense provides ongoing support to staff about our role in maintaining child safe environments. This has been through both supervision as well as training.

The strategies that Kid Sense have in place to supervise, train and support our employees include:

- Regular supervision: each staff member has a direct supervisor they meet with (at a minimum on a monthly basis).
- An in-depth induction period, where staff members view and sign off on the Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct (along with our other policies), so that they are clear of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing, and reporting obligations
- Regular performance appraisals: each staff member has a yearly performance review.
- Probation reviews: each new staff member has a mid (3-month) and final (6-month) probation review meeting with their supervisor and manager.
- A Child Safe Officer, who has an educative role within our organisation
- Ensuring all staff read and understand the Mandatory Notification Information Booklet, which is available via our sharepoint page. (https://dhs.sa.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/103179/CSE-Mandatory-notification-information-booklet.PDF)
- Ensuring all staff have access to and have read our Mandated Reporting Policy and resources, which are available via our SharePoint (which includes when and how to report to SAPOL, CARL, NDIS Commission and/ or our Internal Kid Sense Report).
- Requiring all staff to view the resource 'Keeping our kids safe' which has been developed by SNAICC, which is now part of our induction training tasks (<https://www.snaicc.org.au/policy-and-research/child-safety-and-wellbeing/keeping-our-kids-safe/>)
- Having child safety as a meeting agenda for our leadership meetings
- Access to our SharePoint which has pages and information on Child Safe Environments and Mandated Reporting

- Quarterly professional development days as a whole team, which focusses on building knowledge and skills regarding the wellbeing and development of children and young people, to ensure our staff are up to date and knowledgeable in this area
- Providing an in-service on Child Safe Environments at least every 3 years (but accessible recording online that can be viewed at any time) at our Quarterly Professional Development days
- Access for all staff to complete the 'Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect- Education and Care' (RRHAN-EC) course, paid for by Kid Sense, for staff completing school visits.
- Availability of senior staff that staff can access at any time, to ask questions regarding Child Safety and reporting requirements
- All clinical leadership staff having the formal "Safe Environments: Through their Eyes" Child Safe Environments training, every 3 years.

All staff are required to view and sign off on our Incident Reporting and Mandated Reporting guidelines, and to review our SharePoint resources and information regarding this. All staff that do school based visits, are required to complete the 'Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect- Education and Care' (RRHAN-EC) course, paid for by Kid Sense. Staff are encouraged and linked to the course to complete "Safe Environments: Through their Eyes", and all leadership staff are mandated to complete this, at a minimum every three years. The remainder of the staff will then be provided this information through an in-service at one of our Professional Development Days, at a minimum every three years, but available at all times via our online recording from the most recent presentation.

Kid Sense conducts quarterly Professional Development Days and provides updates to staff on any changes to these National Principles and seeks feedback from staff in relation to our Child Safe Policy and Environment.

We have a clear reporting process for all staff, and staff are encouraged to speak to their Senior Manager about their concerns and the report they have made or are planning to make.

NDIS also have a clear reporting process for their participants, our staff are trained and granted access by Kid Sense via PRODA to allow voluntary and confidential reporting.

10. REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO HARM OR RISK OF HARM

National Principle 6

All therapists (Occupational Therapists and Speech Pathologists) are mandated notifiers, within our organisation, including our therapy management team (Senior therapists, Clinical Leads of Occupational Therapy and Speech Pathology), Clinical Director, and Executive Director). All mandated notifiers have a legal obligation to report a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

Non-mandated notifiers at Kid Sense, which include our Admin/ Reception team, are encouraged to make voluntary reports about harm or risk of harm to a child or young person.

Kid Sense has a reporting procedure, which can be found on SharePoint regarding the process of this. This includes that reports regarding the reasonable belief that a child or young person is, or may be, at risk of harm, are to be made to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78 or via the online system, as per our procedure. However, any child that is at immediate risk, is also required to be reported to South Australia Police (SAPOL) on 000, first, in addition to a CARL report. In cases involving Aboriginal Children and young people, support is provided by Yaitya Tirramangkotti, an Aboriginal Team, via the CARL number. In addition to this, Kid Sense also has a process of when and how to report to the NDIS commission (for NDIS clients) and through our Kid Sense internal reporting processes.

The individual, who identifies the harm or risk of harm, is the person who makes the report to CARL and/ or SAPOL, and this is not reported internally for another staff member to determine if it is a reportable matter. However, all staff are able to access support from senior therapists and our child safety officer, if they require further support for this.

All Kid Sense staff that make a report, will then be guided by the relevant authority (Department for Children Protection or SA Police) about how to proceed after a notification.

Kid Sense staff are not mandated to advise management if a CARL report has been done, however are encouraged to do so (through their supervisor) so that they can be supported regarding the management of this. If a report has been made to SAPOL, we require staff to advise management through an internal Kid Sense report, so that we can review our risk management and supports for our staff. This is crucial to ensure we can best support the child or young person. Following a CARL or SAPOL report regarding a child or young person, the Kid Sense reporter would continue to monitor for the child or young person's safety when on site at Kid Sense, and add any further information or observations to the report, if and when they arise.

Kid Sense supports staff following a CARL or SAPOL report, by being able to help guide them through the reporting process (which is outlined step by step on SharePoint), as well as provide supervision following this, to discuss the child or young person further, and provide any recommendations for ongoing. Kid Sense will continue to offer support to the child or young person through continuing to provide their therapy services and monitoring their circumstances, and recommendations to the family, child or young person, where appropriate or possible, further external services and support.

11. REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO GENERAL COMPLAINTS OR FEEDBACK

National Principle 6

Kid Sense has a comprehensive *Complaint Management System*. Our Complaint and Feedback system is available to everyone who attends a Kid Sense site, for children, young people and families to use, if they feel there are suspected breaches of the code of conduct or staff misconduct. Our Complaint Management System clearly outlines:

- Links to our Code of Conduct
- Provides information on how to lodge a formal complaint
- Provides timeframes for responses and record-keeping

- Roles and Responsibilities of the Kid Sense Leadership in response

It is a mandatory requirement during our induction phase that all staff read and acknowledge our *Complaints Management System* so they are able to assist clients where necessary to lodge a formal complaint.

Kid Sense staff listen to and act upon any concerns that children, young people or their families raise with us. We conduct Annual Feedback Surveys to all current clients of Kid Sense, which are available as printed hard-copies at our sites during the survey period.

Information about our Complaints and Feedback process is available at each site with clear guidance on how to lodge feedback to Kid Sense. Each waiting room has a system that families, children or young people can fill out in regards to feedback, and be able to provide this anonymously if they wish.

Each invoice emailed to clients also contains the links to Client Feedback /Complaints.

Kid Sense deals with all complaints and feedback promptly, sensitively and fairly. All staff have been trained in complaints management and following the complaints management policy and procedure, which they can view on the complaints management SharePoint page and acknowledgement in their *Employee Handbook*, upon induction.

Kid Sense has many ways in which children, young people and families can provide feedback or make a complaint which includes:

- Verbally to a staff member
- Filling out the feedback, compliments and complaints form with a staff member
- By calling Kid Sense on 8272 7522
- In writing and posting it to kid sense to 90 Unley Road Unley, or via email to kidsense@childdevelopment.com.au
- Filling out the feedback, compliments and complaints form and putting this in the suggestion box (which is located in each waiting room at each site)

When Kid Sense receives a complaint, we follow the below steps:

- Listen to the complaint/ feedback (or read it) and make record of this in our register
- Acknowledge this complaint to the client within 48 hours of receiving (if in writing or via another staff member) and advise time expected for an outcome
- If cannot be solved in 48 hours, practice manager escalates the complaint to the executive director
- Respond to the complaint with an outcome
- Clearly document actions taken on register

The form, which is displayed in each waiting room, also explains the ways that children, young people and families can escalate any feedback or complaints, which includes to:

- NDIS quality and safeguard commission
- Australian human rights commission
- The South Australian equal opportunity commission
- Consumer and business services SA

If Kid Sense receives a complaint regarding staff misconduct, a process would be followed, to meet with the staff member, to better understand what has occurred. Based on all of the information, a decision would be made, whether the staff member requires a performance

improvement plan, requires any further supervision or training, or can remain employed at Kid Sense (dependant on the outcome). Kid Sense always offers clients (children, young people and families) to swap therapists, if they feel they connect better with another staff member also.

12. RISK MANAGEMENT

National Principle 8

Kid Sense has a Risk Management assessment document, which we follow (and review annually) to review any associated risks regularly and implement strategies to minimise and manage these risks. This includes wellbeing and physical risks.

Refer to our 'Risk Management Assessment' document to view the associated risks and what we have been doing to manage these risks.

13. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

National Principle 9

Kid Sense has a range of policies and procedures, all of which are within our *Employee Handbook* and/or referenced on SharePoint. The related policies and procedures that Kid Sense has that are related to child safe environments include:

- This child safe policy
- Code of conduct for working with children and young people
- Risk management assessment guide for child safe environments
- Client risk assessment procedure (for clinic based and community visits) with action plan. This is where each of our clients have a yearly (or more frequent if required) risk assessment and action plan completed with the family, to ensure our staff have the most up to date information regarding the child (such as allergies or care arrangements) and therefore a current action plan (to ensure safety for the child, young person, their family/ carers, and staff)
- Incident & Reporting Procedure
- Complaints Management Policy & Procedure
- Pre-employment paperwork which is sent to employees, to ensure they have completed the required checks before they can begin employment (e.g. their 'not prohibited' WWCC)

Kid Sense also has a range of strategies we have in place to assist with Child and Young Person safety. This includes:

- Having all therapy rooms locked when not in use, to ensure children and young people cannot enter with no supervision. This is to reduce any incidents or injuries that could occur, if a child was to use any of the equipment with no supervision.
- Having peepholes on each therapy room door, so that in the event a child or young person requires further assistance (for example if becoming dysregulated) a therapist or their carer that may not be in the room, can check and enter to help if appropriate. This also then means that if a parent or caregiver is unable to be present in the therapy room for a

particular reason of their choice, that they can observe the session or check in on their child this way.

- Duress buttons located in all therapy rooms at our Unley location (largest location) so that if a child or young person requires further support, the therapist can seek help immediately this way (e.g. if a child or young person is injured). Smaller clinics are of sufficient size that any issues are noted by colleagues.

- All senior staff require a current First Aid and CPR and to update these as required. This means all our locations have a first aid officer to help children and young people if required.

- Safety gates are located in each of our clinics, to avoid the risk of any child or young person running out onto a busy road, without their parent nearby.

- Having a risk management SharePoint page for all staff to access at all times

Kid Sense takes relevant steps to minimise the risks to children and young people due to the actions or omissions of employees, contractors or other people within our organisation. We review our risks regularly to address any new or emerging risks in order to maintain a safe environment for children and young people.

Reviews are as per our *Schedule of Programmable Events* and include:

- WH&S as an agenda item on the weekly leadership meetings, to identify any emerging risks
- Annual Review of our Hazards Register
- Quarterly Review of our Risk Assessments
- Review of the Kid Sense Policy and Procedures per Review Timetable
- Internal Audit of Client Risk Assessments
- Internal Audit of Clinical Notes

14. POLICY REVIEW

National Principle 9

Kid Sense has developed this Child Safe Policy in consultation with multiple stakeholders and with every effort to meet all the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

This policy is available online via our website, online via our Employee SharePoint Portal and within our Employee Handbook that all staff have access to sign off during induction.

Our Annual Survey for current clients of Kid Sense, along with our Internal Annual Survey for staff provides us with valuable feedback when reviewing this policy.

Internal Audit Systems and our Schedule of Programmable Events further supports Kid Sense to ensure continued compliance with this policy.

Kid Sense embraces the principal of CANI (Continuous and Never-Ending Improvement) across the whole business unit.

Kid Sense will, at a minimum, review the Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct, as well as related procedures, every 5 years, as required by *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*. We will lodge a new child safe environments compliance statement with Department of Human Services each time we review and update our policy.

This current Child Safe Policy was finalised and approved in February 2023, and will be due to review by February 2028.

Our policy will be reviewed sooner if:

- 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 our organisation.
- Concerns 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 are low.