



## Section Five: Client Services

### Policy 5.1 Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy

#### **Background**

NESAY is committed to child safety and wellbeing. We want children to feel safe, happy and empowered. We have a zero tolerance of child abuse and any form of discrimination and will take all allegations and concerns seriously.

#### **Policy Statement**

NESAY will provide an environment where children and young people feel safe. The welfare of the children and young people in our care will always be our first priority and protecting children and preventing abuse will be embedded into our thinking and practice. NESAY services will be delivered to children and young people in a culturally and inclusive way. This policy applies to all staff, board members, volunteers and individuals/groups involved with NESAY.

#### **Definitions**

- Child** *people up to the age of 18 years. This definition is consistent with the Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012 (Version No. 007, updated 16 March).*
- Child abuse** *is an act by parents, caregivers or others which endangers a child or young person's physical or emotional health or development. Child abuse can be a single incident, but usually takes place over time. Retrieved from Department of Health and Human Services (2013).*
- Staff** *Includes NESAY team members who work in a paid or unpaid position*

#### **Policy**

NESAY'S commitment to child safety and wellbeing is stipulated in the 'Child Safe code of conduct'. NESAY is committed to child safety and wellbeing, and to creating an environment where:

- Children are respected and supported to feel safe, happy and empowered.
- There is cultural safety of Aboriginal children and culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and a safe environment for children with a disability.
- NESAY has a legal and moral requirement to contact authorities if we are concerned about a child's safety. This includes any acts of grooming for sexual conduct.
- Risk of child abuse is identified early and the risk is removed or reduced to a satisfactory standard.
- Child safety & wellbeing policy underpins all recruitment practices for staff and volunteers.
- Staff are provided with support and training to identify, assess and minimise risks of potential child abuse.
- Staff are provided with support and training to be able to enact these commitments.



## **Responsibilities**

### **All staff**

- Familiarising and enacting this child safety and wellbeing policy.
- Inform volunteers and young people that NESAY is a child safe organisation and is legally required to report allegations of child abuse.
- Report any concerns of child abuse to their manager.
- Maintain adequate record keeping of child safety issues and responses of any incidents.
- Keep all records safe and maintain privacy of all children.
- Report any form of discrimination or exclusion to Leadership team.
- Respectful, inclusive and welcoming of families from a range of cultural and diverse backgrounds.

### **Leadership Team**

- Facilitate recruitment, induction, supervision that is informed by and reflective of child safety. This includes training and support for team members to enable understanding and compliance
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of and enact NESAY's commitment to child safety and wellbeing policy.
- Will help create an organisational culture where children are protected from abuse and discrimination.
- Create a confidential culture for reporting all suspected abuse claims.
- Provide a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability.
- Respond and investigate any reports that there is a breach of this policy.

## **Related Policy/Procedure/Documents**

- Policy 4.1 Recruitment and Selection
- Procedure 4.1.1 Recruitment and Induction
- Policy 4.2 Criminal History Checks
- Procedure 4.2.1 Working with Children Check Protocol
- Policy 4.4 Child Safety & Wellbeing Code of Conduct
- Policy 4.7 Volunteer Policy
- Policy 4.18 Whistleblower Protection
- Policy 4.19 Reportable Conduct
- Policy 5.2 Accompanying Children
- Procedure 5.2.1 Supporting Accompanying Children
- Policy 6.3 Incident, Hazard and Near Miss Reports



**Relevant Legislation and Guidelines**

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015
- Children’s Services Act 1996 VIC. Amended 2011
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 VIC. Amended 2011
- Worker Screening Act 2020
- Working with Children Regulations 2016
- United Nations International Charter of the Rights of the Child
- Failure to Protect Legislation
- Failure to Disclose Legislation
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

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