

Child Safe Policy

Social Support and Counselling

Owner Operator: Charmayne Payne

Version: 1.0

Review Date: May 2027

Purpose

Social Support and Counselling is committed to promoting and protecting the safety, wellbeing, participation, dignity, and rights of all children and young people.

This policy outlines the organisation's commitment to child safe practices and establishes expectations for all workers, contractors, volunteers, students, and representatives.

Social Support and Counselling has zero tolerance for:

- Child abuse
- Neglect
- Grooming
- Exploitation
- Harassment
- Bullying
- Discrimination
- Emotional, physical, or sexual harm

This policy aligns with:

- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
 - NSW Child Protection legislation
 - Australian Counselling Association Code of Ethics and Practice
 - NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission Practice Standards and Code of Conduct
 - Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Standards
 - Australian Human Rights principles
 - Mandatory reporting obligations
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Scope

This policy applies to:

- Owner operator

- Employees
- Contractors
- Volunteers
- Students
- Agency workers
- Any person engaged by or representing Social Support and Counselling

This policy applies to:

- Face-to-face services
 - Online and telehealth services
 - Home visits
 - Community supports
 - Group activities
 - Phone and electronic communication
 - Social media interactions
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Statement of Commitment

Social Support and Counselling is committed to:

- Creating environments where children feel safe, respected, and heard
- Promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- Promoting the safety of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Promoting the safety of children with disability
- Supporting participation and inclusion
- Taking all concerns seriously
- Responding quickly and appropriately to child safety concerns
- Empowering children to express their views and rights

Children and young people have the right to:

- Be safe
 - Be listened to
 - Be respected
 - Participate in decisions affecting them
 - Receive support free from abuse, harm, discrimination, or exploitation
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Definitions

Child

A child or young person is any individual under 18 years of age.

Child Abuse

Child abuse may include:

- Physical abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - Emotional or psychological abuse
 - Neglect
 - Exposure to family violence
 - Grooming
 - Exploitation
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Child Safe Principles

Social Support and Counselling will:

- Place child safety at the centre of decision-making
 - Promote child participation and voice
 - Maintain safe physical and online environments
 - Ensure professional boundaries are maintained
 - Respond to concerns promptly
 - Reduce opportunities for harm
 - Promote inclusion and cultural safety
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Code of Conduct Expectations

All workers must:

- Treat children with dignity, respect, and kindness
- Listen to and take children seriously
- Use age-appropriate and respectful communication
- Maintain professional boundaries
- Promote participation and empowerment
- Act as positive role models
- Follow mandatory reporting obligations
- Report concerns immediately

Workers must never:

- Shame, humiliate, intimidate, threaten, or degrade a child
 - Use physical punishment
 - Develop inappropriate personal relationships
 - Engage in sexualised behaviour or conversations
 - Be alone with a child where unnecessary or avoidable
 - Share inappropriate images or messages
 - Ignore or minimise disclosures or concerns
 - Use discriminatory or abusive language
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Recruitment and Screening

Social Support and Counselling is committed to safe recruitment practices.

Where applicable, workers may be required to provide:

- Working With Children Check (WWCC)
- NDIS Worker Screening Clearance
- Reference checks
- Qualification verification
- Identification verification

Any concerns regarding suitability to work with children will be taken seriously.

Training and Supervision

Workers will receive:

- Child safe induction and orientation
 - Information regarding reporting obligations
 - Guidance on professional boundaries
 - Ongoing supervision and support where applicable
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Professional Boundaries

Workers must:

- Maintain clear professional relationships
- Avoid favouritism or inappropriate contact
- Obtain consent for communication where appropriate

- Maintain appropriate physical, emotional, and online boundaries

Workers must not:

- Exchange personal gifts inappropriately
 - Contact children outside professional purposes
 - Engage in private or secretive communication
 - Share personal or intimate information
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Online Safety and Social Media

Workers must:

- Use professional communication only
- Protect privacy and confidentiality
- Obtain consent before photographs or recordings
- Use secure and appropriate online platforms

Workers must not:

- Add children on personal social media accounts
 - Share identifying information online
 - Engage in inappropriate messaging or communication
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Responding to Concerns and Disclosures

All child safety concerns will be taken seriously.

If a child discloses harm or abuse, workers must:

- Remain calm and supportive
- Listen without judgement
- Reassure the child they have done the right thing
- Avoid leading questions
- Record factual information
- Report concerns immediately

Workers must not:

- Promise secrecy
 - Investigate independently
 - Ignore or minimise concerns
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Mandatory Reporting

Workers must comply with NSW mandatory reporting requirements.

Concerns regarding:

- Abuse
 - Neglect
 - Grooming
 - Exploitation
 - Significant harm
- must be reported immediately.

Where required, reports may be made to:

- NSW Department of Communities and Justice
- NSW Police
- Child Protection Helpline
- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
- Other regulatory bodies

Emergency: 000

NSW Child Protection Helpline: 132 111

Complaint and Reporting Processes

Children, families, carers, and advocates have the right to raise concerns safely.

Complaints or concerns may be made:

- Verbally
- In writing
- By email
- Through an advocate or support person

All concerns will:

- Be treated respectfully
 - Be documented
 - Be responded to promptly
 - Remain confidential where possible
 - Be managed without victimisation or retaliation
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Risk Management

Social Support and Counselling will:

- Identify and reduce child safety risks
 - Maintain safe environments
 - Review incidents and complaints
 - Improve systems and practices
 - Monitor compliance with child safe requirements
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Privacy and Confidentiality

Information regarding children and families will:

- Be stored securely
- Be accessed only where necessary
- Be managed in accordance with privacy legislation

Confidentiality may be limited where:

- Safety concerns exist
 - Mandatory reporting obligations apply
 - Disclosure is required by law
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Breaches of this Policy

Breaches of this policy may result in:

- Supervision or retraining
 - Removal from duties
 - Termination of engagement
 - Mandatory reporting to authorities
 - Notification to regulatory bodies
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Related Documents

- Code of Conduct
- Complaint and Incident Management Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- WHS Policy

- Incident Report Form
 - Risk Management Policy
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Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually
 - Following legislative updates
 - Following incidents or complaints
 - As part of continuous improvement practices
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Approval

Approved By:
Charmayne Payne

C. Payne

Owner Operator
Social Support and Counselling

Date: 20.05.2026