

hey dee ho Child Safety Policy

and

Commitment to Child Safety



# hey dee ho’s commitment to child safety

hey dee ho is committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures. We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child’s safety, which we follow rigorously.

Our organisation is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

Our organisation has recruitment practices in place for all staff and is committed to training and educating our staff child abuse risks.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team and staff to achieve these commitments.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

# Code of conduct for Interacting with children

Children who are vital and active participants in our organisation should be empowered. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

* promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
* promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
* promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from diverse family and community backgrounds
* ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

All of our staff must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child

safety is everyone’s responsibility.

Our organisational culture aims for all staff (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and the Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

# Recruitment

hey dee ho take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our organisation understands that when recruiting staff we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check, police check or blue card and to provide evidence of this Check.

We carry out reference checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people.

Safety screening is not a means of precluding people with an adverse history from employment. The relevance of any adverse history is assessed strictly in relation to the work environment and job role. All of these checks are undertaken in strict compliance with the privacy and confidentiality principles as required by relevant legislation. Competitive applicants will be informed before a check is conducted.

# Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone’s safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

# Legislative responsibilities

Our organisation takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

* **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
* **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

# Risk management

hey dee ho are required to protect children when a risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to children.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media).

# Allegations, concerns and complaints

hey dee ho takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families and staff know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

* a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves).
* behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed.
* someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it.
* observing suspicious behaviour.

**Biennial Review or After Incident Review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur.

