



Division 1: Rights and Responsibilities

10.3 Child Safe Environment Policy and Procedure

Child Safe Environment Policy and Procedure

1.0 Purpose

Respite with Linda recognises the child's right to feel safe and to live in an environment that protects from assault, neglect, exploitation or any other form of harm or risk of harm. This policy specifically looks at the requirements when working with children under eighteen (18) years. This policy has been designed to meet the Children & Young People (Safety) Act 2017 and the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 to create a safe environment.

Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring all staff are trained, understand and sign that they have read and understood this policy and the Code of Conduct.
- Actively seek input and give children and young people, families, staff and relevant others a voice in this policy and our practices
- Ensure and confirm that all staff working with children hold the relevant Working with Children Check and NDIS Screening Check
- Review this policy at least every five years
- Monitor and manage the currency of all screening and compliance checks
- Ensure that contractors hold current checks and agree to our policy and Code of Conduct
- Ensure all children and young people have a support plan designed to suit their requirements
- Risk Assessment and management strategies are undertaken and reviewed
- Hold current checks – Working with Children and NDIS Screening



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- Supply a copy of this policy upon request

Management, staff and volunteers are required to:

- Read, understand, seek clarification (as required) and agree to this policy and the Code of Conduct
- Hold current checks – Working with Children and NDIS Screening
- Comply with their job descriptions
- Follow all policies and procedures
- Provide feedback on policies and practices
- Report all risks or potential risks of harm to children and young people immediately.
- Communicate any complaints and incident information to management
- Always comply with Child Safe Standards and all state legislative requirements

Contractors are required to:

- Read, understand, seek clarification (as required) and agree to this policy and the Code of Conduct
- Hold and provide copies of current checks – Working with Children and NDIS Screening
- Comply with their contract
- Follow all policies and procedures
- Provide feedback on policies and practices
- Report all risks or potential risks of harm to children and young people immediately.
- Communicate any complaints and incident information to management
- Always comply with Child Safe Standards and all state legislative requirements



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2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all staff and stakeholders linked to our organisation, including:

- Staff
- Contractors
- Volunteers
- Management
- Children
- Young people
- Families
- Networks

3.0 Definitions

Term	Definitions
Child or young person	persons under 18 years of age.
Complainant	a person who makes a complaint
Harm	Section 17 of the Safety Act defines 'harm' to mean physical or psychological harm (whether caused by any 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



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Term	Definitions
	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
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 assesses 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.

4.0 Policy

This policy uses National Child Safe Standards and aims to create an environment where children and young people can feel safe by:



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- taking a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child well-being and safety issues
 - all staff are required to hold a Working with Children Check and NDIS worker screening
 - training staff in safety measures to prevent and identify harm or risk of harm
 - provide children and young people with information about their rights, complaints and incidents
 - seek feedback and input from children, young people, their families and staff to ensure that our policies and practices encompass all aspects of child safety.
 - Management, staff, and contractors must read, understand, and sign that they have read, agreed, and complied with this policy and the code of conduct.
- value and embrace the opinions and views of children and young people
 - provide opportunities for children and young people to provide feedback through communication – email, phone, discussion,
 - documenting children and young people's voice
 - reporting input to management so we can improve and design services to meet their needs.
- assist children and young people in building skills that will assist them in participating in society
 - design a support plan to meet individual needs
 - identify areas to build skills
 - create strategies
 - implement strategies
 - review and monitor skill development



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- update and adjust as required.
- are focused and take action on protecting children and young people from harm.
 - staff must report any harm or risk of harm identified
 - risk management strategies must be actions (see 3.1 Risk Management)

Respite with Linda will encourage and support any person who has witnessed the harm or risk of harm to a child or young person or who suspects that harm or risk of harm has occurred to make a report and be confident of doing so without fear of retribution.

Staff are required to engage with children and young people and develop a relationship where the child and the young person feel safe. Staff must listen, acknowledge and respond to each child or young person, so they know the staff member will act positively to their needs and any information they share. By developing this trusting relationship, children or young people can give feedback or complain (Refer to Appendix B Child Safety Standards for details on approaching each standard).

Relevant handbooks are provided to staff and families, and the Child and Young Person's Handbook and Staff Handbook have information about mandatory reporting. Staff are trained at induction and ongoing in child safety requirements and their obligation under the *Children & Young People (Safety) Act 2017* and have access to our policies to review any procedures or requirements as required.

Respite with Linda, as a mandatory reporting body, is required to report any indicators. Under Section 30 (3) of the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*, *employees of, or volunteers in, an organisation that provides health* are mandated reporters; therefore, our staff who perform the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of services to children and young people (whether or not those duties constitute child or young person-related work under the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016*).



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This policy is supported by our Core NDIS Policy and Procedures, including:

- Zero Tolerance Policy and Procedure
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Procedures
- Human Resources Management Policy and Procedure
- Risk Management Policy and Procedure
- Working with Children Check Policy and Procedure
- Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination
- Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedure
- NDIS Worker Screening and Risk Assessed Roles Policy and Procedure
- Individual Values and Beliefs Policy and Procedure

4.1 Risk Assessment

Respite with Linda acknowledges that prevention is the best protection from harm or risk of harm and recognises their duty of care obligations to implement prevention strategies. Each child or young person has completed an Individual Risk Profile and Home Safety Checklist. This information allows us to create a Support plan designed to provide support and care for the child or young person, including physical safety and the child or young person's well-being

Identified risks may include:

- Our culture is not child-safe focussed
- The organisation's current code of conduct is not role-related, targeted to our organisation, or is not circulated to or understood by staff and volunteers
- Children/young people do not feel included
- Children/young people and their families are not supported to report concerns, complaints and feedback



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- Children/young people are physically touched by staff/volunteers to correct techniques (physiotherapy, occupational therapy)
- Children/young people have access to an unsafe online environment
- Organisational staff (including employees and volunteers) harm children/young people
- Third-party contractors (while delivering services for the organisation) harm children/young people
- Children/young people are not supported when harm occurs
- Recruitment of a 'prohibited person' within the organisation or contracting with a third party that does not have a Working with Children Check (WWCC) or a child-safe environments compliance statement (see Appendix A)
- Allowing a person to work with children or young people while the WWCC is being processed
- Organisational staff (including employees and volunteers) do not understand their obligations to report harm and risk of harm to the Child Abuse Report Line and SA Police if a child/young person is at immediate risk or requires an internal reporting process before meeting legal obligations to report to CARL
- Use of power to hurt, scare or control children/young people
- Not allowing children/young people to participate in spiritual or religious practices that are important to them
- Children/young people are provided with unsupervised services
- The organisation holds overnight and/or offsite activities with children/young people
Child safe environments compliance statement is not lodged with the Department of Human Services
- Taking images of children and young people



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- Supervision of children and young people
- Physical environment
- Online communications between staff/volunteers and children/young people
- Protecting privacy and confidentiality
- Procedures for dealing with situations where a member is being investigated for or is charged with a serious criminal offence

Risk minimisation actions

- Child-focused Code of Conduct is in place that sets the behavioural standards expected, including what happens when a breach occurs, is circulated to staff and volunteers and is displayed in public places
- Meet the requirements of the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* (which mandates child safe environments) and the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016* (which mandates Working with Children Checks)
- Strategies are in place to make sure that child safety (through the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations) is embedded across the organisation
- The organisation uses inclusive, developmentally- appropriate language and resources to help children/young people to feel valued, respected and included
- Strategies to embed a child safe organisational culture are reviewed and updated regularly
- The Child Safe Environments Policy is reviewed at least once every five years. A new child safe environments compliance statement is lodged with the Department of Human Services when this happens.



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- Support through training and supervision is provided to organisational staff (including employees and volunteers) through
 - Quarterly reviews
 - Seeking feedback from supervisors
 - Induction training - understanding of harm and risk of harm and how to report effectively
 - regular supervision meetings are conducted to review practice and update where appropriate, and training provided that increases
- Working with Children Checks (WWCC) are undertaken to ensure that people working with children and young people are assessed as suitable. Those who are not suitable ('Prohibited' WWCC) cannot work with children and young people in our organisation.
- Recruitment processes, including undertaking referee checks to ensure the suitability of persons before they are employed/volunteer with our organisation, are completed
- When taking images of children and young people, must have the consent of the child or young person and parent/guardian consent required
- Complaints processes are in place and promoted to children, young people and their families to make sure that they feel safe reporting to the organisation
- Cyber safety and social media guidelines are in place and provided to all staff and volunteers
- Appropriate supervision is provided for all online activities
- Children and young people are to be supervised by parents/guardians at all times
- Our child-safe environments policies and procedures (including Code of Conduct) are made available to staff, volunteers, children, young people and their families by <insert options here – could include welcome/induction packs, website, Facebook>



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- Children, young people and their families are encouraged to participate in our organisation and provide feedback through surveys, questionnaires, and feedback opportunities during sessions
- If children and young people are harmed, we support them and their families by <insert options here – could include following your organisation's reporting and responding to harm/risk of harm procedure which sets out the process for reporting to CARL and connecting those impacted with appropriate support services)
- Staff, volunteers and contractors undertake training to understand their obligations to report harm and risk of harm (see Training
- All staff, volunteers, and contractors are required to read the Child Safe Environments Policy, Code of Conduct, Child Safe Environments Mandatory Notification Information Booklet and undertake child safe e-learning modules in the first week of working with the organisation
- Where physical contact is required, this is undertaken safely by explaining why contact is required and what will happen and asking the child/young person for their permission (or their family if this is more appropriate) before proceeding
- Staff, volunteers and contractors working with children and young people with disability must hold a valid Working with Children Check (WWCC) even if they are working with children and young people less than seven days a year

According to our internal reviews of policies and procedures, this policy must be reviewed every five years.

Staff should guide children and young people who require assistance to Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800 and Youth Helpline on 1300 13 17 19 for support, as required.



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4.2 Staff requirements, support and training

The legislative requirement is that staff engaged in a risk-assessed role must have the required South Australian clearance checks. We will meet the requirements of the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016* and ensure that staff and volunteers have a valid, 'not prohibited' Working with Children Check issued by the Screening Unit of the Department of Human Services.

All staff must undergo an interview before a job offer is made. This interview will include:

- overview experience working with children and young people
- behaviour management techniques, e.g. questions such as:
 - Tell me about when you had to manage a child or young person with behavioural problems
 - How would you respond if a child or young person started yelling at you?
 - What if they started to throw items?

Screening post-interview of the suitable candidate is essential, and this process includes at least two (2) reference checks and qualification checks. All hired staff will have buddying to two (2) shifts, be allocated a supervisor and have a probationary period.

During their onboarding process, all staff and volunteers are trained in child and young person's safety and must undertake annual training to ensure they are current with standards and requirements. Staff must read and agree to comply with the Code of Conduct (see Appendix B). We will use the Mandatory Reporter Guide as part of the training. Our staff annual performance review will review current knowledge of standards and reporting. This information will be used to create relevant training against SA requirements. All information will be recorded in the person's Staff Training Record; note contractors will have this form to record their training to ensure compliance.



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Staff will be trained in:

- The real or potential risk of harm indicators
- Mandatory reporting obligations
- Internal requirements for informing management
- Completing Incident Investigation so management can review the information
- Not asking leading questions
- Code of Conduct
- Commitment to the safety of children and young people
- Record keeping and information sharing
- Job description

Our mandated notifiers to attend a 'Safe Environments: Through Their Eyes' training course. Management meetings will include child and young person's safety on their agenda. Staff, contractors, and volunteers must:

- read and understand the [Mandatory Notification Information Booklet](https://dhs.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/103179/CSE-Mandatory-notification-information-booklet.PDF) (see: https://dhs.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/103179/CSE-Mandatory-notification-information-booklet.PDF)
- complete the online SMART (Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma) training (see: <https://professionals.childhood.org.au/prosody/2015/07/smart-online>)
- view the resources Keeping our kids safe developed by SNAICC at <https://www.snaicc.org.au/policy-and-research/child-safety-and-wellbeing/keeping-our-kids-safe/>
- be provided with professional development opportunities to build knowledge and skills regarding the well-being and development of children and young people



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- how regularly they complete the specific training, e.g. every three years (mandatory reporting, Keeping our kids safe)

All staff have quarterly supervision and support meetings or visits, allowing us to determine the current knowledge and skills of the worker, therefore, allowing us to create additional support and guidance as required. Staff reporting any risk of harm will undertake a debriefing session, and this session will determine additional support required, e.g. professional support.

Before employment, staff must undergo the Working with Children Check and NDIS worker screening process. Results are recorded in their personnel file. Employees performing within a child or young person-related role have been determined as a risk-assessed and require NDIS Worker Screening. It is the responsibility of the employee to apply to the state Worker Screening Unit (WSU), provide the relevant application information and pay the fee.

It is then the responsibility of the Manager to verify all risk-assessed roles and maintain appropriate records using the Contractor Risk Assessed Check Form, Risk Assessed Role Register and the Risk-Assessed Role – Employee Register. Staff cannot work with children and young people unless their worker's screening has been verified.

Staff, volunteers, contractors, or other relevant parties must comply with child-safe standards, legislation, and regulations. At any stage, a person breaches any of these compliance requirements; the Manager will advise the Screening Unit regarding this person, including any serious criminal offence, child protection information, or disciplinary or misconduct information. The informing method will vary according to the current issue but will usually be via phoning the Screening Unit.

5.0 Procedure

5.1 Communication



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We have developed a Child and Young Person's Handbook and Staff handbook that informs children and young people and staff about rights and their right to participate in decisions affecting them. We will always take input seriously as per National Principle 2.

During the initial intake, development of a support plan and reviews, our team informs and involves families in promoting the safety of the child or young person. We work with the child or young person's community to ensure information is provided and they are involved in the child or young person's safety and well-being (National Principle 3).

To comply with Chapter 8 (Section 114(5)) of the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*, children, young people, their families, networks, staff, and contractors can request a copy of the organisation's child-safe environments policies and procedures. We will make this information available on our website for easy access. To request a copy:

1. Email linda@respitewithlinda.com.au
2. Telephone 0419654184
3. Manager or their delegate will forward the policy within 2 working days

5.2 Listening to children and young people (National Principle 2)

Our organisation will

- clearly communicating using age and developmentally-appropriate language)
- feedback and concerns can be reported by children, young people and their families or carers by:

- Email linda@respitewithlinda.com.au
- Telephone 0419654184
- Anonymously self-addressed envelope provided at intake
- Staff or contractors who will record and inform management



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- Design consultation methods suited to our clientele and that consider the child or young person's age, developmental level and cultural backgrounds
- using a survey (hard copy or online)
- invite formal or informal feedback from children and young people about their experiences with us
- invite children and young people to be represented on a board or committee or organise a youth committee or focus group

5.3 When to report a real or potential risk of harm situation

For any child and young person at immediate and real risk, staff must call 000 Police immediately, then inform management. The individual's safety must be at the forefront of all actions.

It is important to always search for the cause of a change in a child or young person's behaviour or unexplained physical symptoms. If a child or young person shows one or more of the possible signs of harm or risk of harm, it must be reported immediately, even though this does not automatically mean harm has taken place.

Possible signs of harm or risk of harm are when:

- a child or young person shows a change in behaviour or mood that may indicate they are at risk of real or potential harm
- someone is seen behaving inappropriately towards a child or young person
- a child or young person tells staff another person is abusing them
- a person tells staff they are abusing a child or young person
- a child, young person or visitor advises staff that they have observed abusive acts



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- someone observes an action or inaction towards the child or young person that may be considered abusive
- a person suspects or has reason to believe a child or young person is at risk of real or potential harm.

The Manager will then report to the South Australian Government's Department of Child Protection. Failure to report an abusive situation may result in a criminal offence.

5.4 How to report

The Manager will use the online child or young person protection reporting system to report a less serious concern(s):

Department of Child Protection

Website: www.reportchildharm.oriskofharm.families.sa.gov.au

The Manager will use their professional understanding and knowledge of child and young person protection to determine when to contact the required reporting body. The Manager will undertake the following:

- At the time it is determined there is a risk of harm, they will report a suspected case of a child or young person's harm or risk of harm via a phone call to:
 - ***Child Harm or risk of harm Report Line (CARL)*** - Phone: 13 14 78
 - if at immediate risk, report to South Australia Police (SAPOL) on 000.
 - In cases involving Aboriginal children and young people, support is provided by Yaitya Tirramangkotti - an Aboriginal team, via the CARL number.
- All serious concerns are reported via the Child Harm or risk of harm Report Line and *not via the website's online reporting system.*



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The individual who identifies the harm or risk of harm is the person who makes the report to CARL/SAPOL and is required to report internally, so Manager can determine if it is a reportable matter.

In all cases, we will be guided by the relevant authority (Department for Child Protection/SA Police) about how to proceed after a notification.

5.5 Details to provide

The Manager will provide the following information to the Child Harm or risk of harm Report Line:

- Child or young person's name, age, date of birth and address
- description of injury, harm or risk of harm (outline current and previous)
- child or young person's current situation
- location of the child, young person, parent or caregiver and alleged perpetrator
- when and how the manager found out about the harm or risk of harm.

5.6 Child identification details and context

Respite with Linda will need to provide enough detail to identify the child or young person and give context to your report, including:

- child or young person's full name
- date of birth or age
- current address
- contact number
- school/kindergarten/childcare centre



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- ethnicity, i.e. cultural background, aboriginal kinship group, non-English speaking
- who are the parents; do they all live in the same house; are there siblings in the house?
- alleged perpetrator's name, age, address, relationship to the child or young person, and current whereabouts
- current whereabouts of the child or young person of concern
- details of when the next expected contact with the alleged perpetrator will occur
- If in place, family court orders, apprehended violence orders, and domestic violence orders.

5.7 Supporting child, young person, family and staff

Our management will put support strategies for the child, young person and their family. Strategies will vary according to the situation, and staff will be informed, trained, and supported in implementing strategies.

Strategies may include:

- Inform the child/young person/family that they are believed. One of the most helpful things you can do following disclosure of harm or risk of harm is to believe the child or young person.
- Reassure the child or young person that they have done the right thing by telling someone about the harm and that they are not in trouble. Give them age-appropriate information regarding what will happen next, ensuring that the adults take care of things (contact Kids Helpline or Youth Helpline). Be careful not to make promises you can't keep, such as not telling anyone else.
- Act protectively



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- Take immediate steps to ensure the child or young person's safety and the safety of other children or young people who may be exposed to abuse.
- Provide adequate support to meet the needs of the individual circumstances, e.g. cultural support and advocacy support.
- Provide staff with debriefing and other supports to ensure that their health and well-being are supported.

5.8 Defining child maltreatment, harm or risk of harm and neglect

Children and young people at risk of real or potential harm are related to any behaviour by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents outside the norms of conduct and entail a substantial risk of causing physical or emotional harm to a child or young person. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e. neglect) and commission (i.e. harm or risk of harm).

5.8.1 Physical harm or risk of harm

- *Signs and symptoms:* Bruising, lacerations, welts, rashes, broken or healing bones, burns, weight loss, facial swelling, missing teeth, pain or restricted movements, crying, acting fearful, agitation, drowsiness, hair loss or poor physical well-being.
- *Causes:* Hitting, slapping, pushing, punching or burning, which involves an incident that is non-accidental, resulting in pain or injury.

5.8.2 Psychological and emotional harm or risk of harm



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- *Signs and symptoms:* Loss of interest in self-care, helplessness, withdrawn, apathy, insomnia, fearfulness, reluctance to communicate openly, choosing not to maintain eye contact, paranoia and confusion.
- *Causes:* Intimidation, humiliation, harassment, threatening behaviour, sleep deprivation, withholding affection, and not allowing a person to maintain their decision-making powers which lead to a pattern when repeated over time.

5.8.3 Financial harm or risk of harm

- *Signs and symptoms:* Unpaid accounts, withholding funds, loss of jewellery and personal belongings, removal of cash from wallet/purse, a person becomes agitated when discussing money, not providing money for outings and personal items, or a person taking over the care of someone's money without their permission.
- *Causes:* Misuse of a person's money, valuables or property, forced changes to legal documents (such as a will), denying access to or control of personal funds, stealing, fraud, forgery, embezzlement, misuse of power of attorney, removing decision-making powers of a person.

5.8.4 Sexual harm or risk of harm

- *Signs and symptoms:* Unexplained sexual transmitted disease, vaginal/anal bleeding, fear of specific people or places, bruising to genital areas, inner thigh or around breasts, anxiety, torn or bloody underclothes, difficulty walking or sitting, change in sleep patterns, repeating nightmares.



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- **Causes:** Rape (penetration or oral-genital contact), interest in older person's bodies, inappropriate comments and sexual references, inappropriate (possibly painful) administration of enemas or genital cleansing, indecent assault, sexual harassment, which is mainly about violence and power over another person rather than sexual pleasure.

5.8.5 Neglect

- **Signs and symptoms:** Poor hygiene or personal care, unkempt appearance, lack of personal items, absence of health aids, weight loss, agitation, inappropriate clothing, and lack of food.
- **Cause:** Intentional failure to provide basic life necessities.

5.8.6 Social harm or risk of harm

- **Signs and symptoms:** Sadness and grief due to people not visiting, anxiety after a specific person's visit, withdrawal, low self-esteem, appearing ashamed, passivity, and listlessness.
- **Causes:** Prevention of contact with friends or family, preventing access to social activities.

5.9 Complaints and Feedback

This section does not relate to a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm. Any complaint about staff, volunteer or contractor that identifies and is found to be real may lead to disciplinary measures and their employment



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being ceased. Any validated complaint related to child protection will lead to the termination of employment.

Complaints and suggestions can be made by:

- using the Complaints and Feedback Form or the Anonymous Complaints and Feedback Form
- contacting a member of staff, verbally or in writing, our staff must offer to document the complaint on behalf of the participant if required and refer the matter to the Manager
- contacting the Complaints Manager, verbally or in writing
- responding to questionnaires and surveys
- sending an email to our contact email
- attending meetings/care conferences
- contacting external complaint agencies, e.g. NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
- communicating orally, in writing, or any other relevant means.

Contacts for making a complaint are listed below:

Complaints Manager	Linda Guillesser
Email address	linda@respitewithlinda.com.au
Phone Number	0419654184
Postal Address	2 Shanti Ln, Morayfield Qld 4506

Complaints may be made by:

- staff
- participants (adults, children, and young people)



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- public
- advocates
- family members
- carers
- anonymous person/s.

Results are recorded in the Complaint, Compliment and Feedback Register, allowing input into our continuous improvement processes. The Continuous Improvement Register will record improvements established after finalising the complaint management process.

If a complaint is about:

- **Support or services:** The Complaints Manager will deal with the complaint.
- **Staff member/s:** The Complaints Manager will deal with the complaint
- **CEO/Manager:** An external person or body may be approached, e.g. NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

All staff, participants, family and advocates, visiting health professionals, and visitors are informed of our complaints process via:

- participant welcome information
- initial access to supports
- staff orientation, induction and training
- Meetings, reviews and assessments
- participant agreements
- contractor agreements.



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5.9.1 Complaint management process

The investigation process must adhere to impartiality, privacy, confidentiality, transparency and timeliness. Complaints will not be discussed with anyone who does not have responsibility for resolving the issue. Respite with Linda must take into consideration any cultural and linguistic needs of a participant and provide the relevant support mechanism, such as an interpreter or similar.

Complainants are provided with access to our Complaints and Feedback form. These may be accessed via staff or management. The Complaints Manager will review the individual's needs and assist them via the best means appropriate to suit them. The variance between individuals requires a personal approach but may include:

- offering an advocate
- providing text telephone (TTY) service to people with a hearing impairment
- ensuring the meeting site is wheelchair accessible
- offering independent assistance to read and write to formulate and lodge a complaint
- seek information from the complainant to determine any special requirements (e.g. access or communication).

The resolution outcomes from a complaint will recognise that people who make a complaint are generally seeking one, or more, of the following outcomes:

- Acknowledgement:
 - genuinely listening without interruption
 - empathising
 - ensuring the complainant feels comfortable (e.g. being aware that staff may be defensive and consider how this is perceived)
 - acknowledgement of the effect of the situation on the individual



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- resolving to a good outcome
 - notifying regularly and promptly on steps undertaken.
- Answers:
 - clear explanations relevant to the issue are provided ONLY once all the facts are known.
- Actions (Action Plan):
 - what will be done?
 - who will do it?
 - action plan completion date
 - how progress will be communicated to all parties involved
 - oversight of actions.
- Apology:
 - consider the form of the apology and the managerial level of response
 - consider timeliness, sincerity
 - be specific and direct
 - accept responsibility if appropriate and provide information on the cause and impacts
 - explain without excuses
 - provide a summary of key actions agreed on to move forward and resolve the issue.

6.0 Related documents

- Code of Conduct Agreement



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- Incident Investigation Form
- Incident Investigation Form Final Report
- Incident Report
- Incident Register
- Child Notes
- Risk Assessment Form
- Risk Management Plan
- Risk Register
- Reportable Incident, Accident and Emergency Policy and Procedure
- Violence, harm or risk of harm, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination Policy and Procedure
- Zero Tolerance Policy and Procedure
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Procedures
- Human Resources Management Policy and Procedure
- Risk Management Policy and Procedure
- Working with Children Check Policy and Procedure
- Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedure
- NDIS Worker Screening and Risk Assessed Roles Policy and Procedure
- Individual Values and Beliefs Policy and Procedure

7.0 References

- Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA)
- Children's Protection (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 2005 (SA)



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- Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)
- Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 (SA)
- NDIS (Practice Standards - Worker Screening) Rules 2018
- NDIS (Quality and Safeguards) Commission 2018
- The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989



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Appendix A Commitment to the safety of children and young people

Respite with Linda is committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. We have zero-tolerance for children and young people being at harm or at risk of harm

We are committed to providing a child-safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability.

All people working for or with us have a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the well-being and safety of all children and young people are at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

In our planning and practices, we will

- Children and young people's safety and protection are our first priority
- Children and young people are valued, respected and encouraged to participate. Their voice is essential to providing appropriate and safe support.
- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
- Value and empower children to participate in decisions that affect their lives;
- Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to disclose harm or risks of harm to children safely
- Respect diversity in cultures and child-rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;



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- all children and young people are embraced regardless of their abilities, sex, gender, or social-economic or cultural background and equity is upheld
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high-quality staff, supervision and professional development;
- Ensure children and young people know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
- Assist children and young people in building skills that will assist them in participating in society
- Focus and take action on the protection of children and young people at risk of harm
- Value the input from children, young people and their families in our policies and practices.
- Report suspected harm or risk of harm, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and well-being of children are at risk; and

Child and Young Person's Handbooks and accessible display areas include information about services that can assist children and young people

- Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800
- Youth Helpline on 1300 13 17 19)



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Appendix B Child Safe Standards

Standard 1. Child safety is embedded in our organisational leadership, governance and culture

- Commitment to safety.
- Staff are trained in:
 - child or young person's safety
 - Codes of Conduct
 - behavioural standards when interacting with children and young people
 - reporting obligations and record keeping.
- Risk management plans are undertaken for each child.
- Comply with the NDIS Code of Conduct, our organisation's Code of Conduct and the Statement of Commitment to Safety (See Appendix A).

Standard 2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

- Children and young people can express their views and are provided opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their lives:
 - upon commencement with our organisation
 - on an ongoing basis (they are asked regularly for their thoughts and ideas)
 - at the review of their plan.
- The importance of friendships is recognised, and support from peers is encouraged, helping children and young people feel safe and be less isolated.
- Work with the child, young person and the family to determine how best to assist with these linkages.



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- Children and young people can access harm or risk of harm prevention programs and information.
- We provide links to relevant organisations such as Kids Helpline, as needed.
- Age-appropriate information that describes how adults should behave towards the child or young person is provided.
- Staff are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to communicate and raise their concerns:
 - staff trained to work with each child and young person
 - knowledge and skills are assessed to determine training to ensure skills and knowledge are evident.

Standard 3. Families and communities are informed and involved

- All levels of our organisation encourage families to take an active role in keeping children and young people safe.
- Our policies and procedures (including the Code of Conduct) are communicated to parents and carers (e.g. Welcome Pack including Child and Young Person's Handbook)
- Families and community members are encouraged to provide feedback on how well the organisation keeps children and young people safe, and this information is acted upon where necessary: Feedback can be provided via:
 - a Complaint and Feedback Form
 - meetings are held about a child and young person.



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Standard 4. Equity is upheld, and diverse needs are considered

- The Manager and our staff understand the type of barriers that prevent children and young people from disclosing harm or risk of harm or adults from recognising a child or young person's disclosure.
- The Manager and our staff identify and respect the diverse needs, abilities and backgrounds of children and young people and understand the value of treating them fairly.
- Our organisation reviews each child or young person's cultural needs at intake.
- We provide relevant, culturally sensitive, age-appropriate activities to children.
- All staff are trained and provided information about the factors that may increase a child or young person's vulnerability to harm.
- The Manager ensures that our workforce reflects the diversity of the children and young people we provide services to, where possible.
- The Manager and staff adapt activities and services to ensure all children and young people feel included, and we undertake the following for each child:
 - risk management plan
 - strategy planning.

Standard 5. People working with children are suitable and supported

- When recruiting, Respite with Linda does not solely rely on the Working with Children Check. We also provide ongoing staff training opportunities for all staff, including:
 - induction
 - annual training



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- When recruiting, Respite with Linda is aware of and implements child and young person safe recruitment practices.
- All vacant position advertisements identify that we value the child and young person's safety.
- Recruitment processes involve a range of interview questions to establish staff suitability.
- Background and reference checks are recorded (see Human Resource Management Policy and Procedure).
- Supervision includes regular reviews to check whether staff follow Codes of Conduct and other child-safe policies.
- The Manager monitors all aspects of supervision and undertakes employee supervision at least quarterly.

Standard 6. Processes when responding to complaints of child abuse (or other concerns) are child-focused.

- The Manager builds a culture where complaints are taken seriously, and all employees take responsibility for the safety of children and young people using our induction process and cultural staff training.
- During a new employee's induction, the Manager clearly explains that the Code of Conduct breaches will result in disciplinary action. Staff are also informed of this ongoing through internal training sessions.
- Staff are given support and information on what and how to report, including external bodies.



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- Accessible procedures enable children, young people, staff and others to make complaints. These procedures include potential time frames, review processes and potential outcomes of complaints.
- Complaints are handled confidentially (see Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedure).
- Processes are reviewed at regular intervals and after a complaint is received by Respite with Linda.
- Documents are treated confidentially, as required.

Standard 7. Staff are equipped with knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training

- The Manager provides ongoing education and training opportunities for all staff, including:
 - knowledge, skills and confidence to prevent and identify real or potential harm
 - how to respond to and report complaints.
- Additional training is provided when higher risks towards a child or young person are involved, e.g. behaviour management
- The Manager is our Child Safety Officer and is responsible for all staff training.
- Training is regularly reviewed in response to emerging best practices.

Standard 8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse or other kinds of harm to occur

- The Manager sets expectations regarding behavioural standards for staff when interacting with children and young people in physical and online environments.



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- Risk assessments identify areas where staff have opportunities to interact with children and young people unsupervised, including one-off events and overnight accommodation.
- Physical environments are altered to increase natural sightlines while respecting a child and young person's right to privacy.
- Higher-risk areas such as cars, boarding facilities and offsite locations are managed using specific safety measures, such as spot checks.
- Children and young people are provided information regarding online safety and are regularly encouraged to tell staff about negative experiences.
- Staff and parents are provided information about risks in the online environment (e.g. online grooming, cyberbullying and sexting).

Standard 9. Implementation of Child Safety Standards are continually reviewed and improved

- The Manager maintains a culture of continuous improvement to ensure that policies and procedures are implemented and routinely reviewed even though staffing may change.
- The Manager understands the value of continuous monitoring, open conversations and exploring new ways to keep children safe.
- Our child-safe policies and practices are reviewed annually.
- Staff refer to the Child Safe Standards when creating, reviewing or evaluating child-safe policies and procedures.
- Critical incidents are used to identify the root cause of a problem, identify risks to children and young people's safety, and make improvements (e.g. Incident Report and Incident Investigation Form and Continuous Improvement Register).



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- Children and young people are supported to provide feedback which we will act on if required.

Standard 10 Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe

- The Manager will ensure that policies and procedures are reviewed and compliant.
- Respite with Linda acknowledges that we will be held accountable for our policies and procedures.
- Staff are trained and knowledgeable about organisation procedures, especially how they relate to child and young person's safety
- Staff, parents and carers are informed and have access to Respite with Linda Child Safe Environments policies and procedures and complaint policy and procedure.



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Appendix C Code of Conduct

I will

- Act following our child and young persons' safety and well-being policies and procedures.
- Behave respectfully, courteously, and ethically towards children, young people, families, and other staff.
- Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children and young people, particularly if they communicate (verbally or non-verbally) that they do not feel safe or well.
- Promote the human rights, safety and well-being of all children and young people in the service.
- Demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries.
- Consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children and young people.
- Create an environment that promotes and enables children and young people's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children, young people and their families.
- Involve children and young people in making decisions about activities, policies and processes that concern them.
- Contribute, where appropriate, to policies, discussions, learning and reviews about child and young person's safety and well-being.
- Identify and mitigate risks to children and young person's safety and well-being as required by our risk assessment and management policy or process.



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- Respond to any concerns or complaints of the child or young person's harm or abuse promptly and in line with our services policy and procedure for receiving and responding to complaints.
- Report all suspected or disclosed child and young person harm or abuse required by *Children & Young People (Safety) Act 2017* and our policy and internal and external reporting procedure.
- Comply with our protocols on communicating with children.
- Comply with *Children & Young People (Safety) Act 2017* and these policies and procedures on record keeping and information sharing.
- Adhering to our Child Safe Environment Policy at all times and taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people
- treating everyone (this includes staff, volunteers, students, children, young people and parents), including those of different race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes and religious beliefs with respect and honesty and ensure equity is upheld
- being a positive role model to children and young people in all your conduct with them
- setting clear boundaries about appropriate behaviour between yourself and the children and young people in your organisation – boundaries help everyone to understand their roles
- listening and responding appropriately to the views and concerns of children and young people
- ensuring another adult is always present or in sight when conducting one to one coaching, instruction or other activity
- being alert to children and young people who are, or may be at risk of harm, and



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reporting this quickly to the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78)

- responding quickly, fairly and transparently to any serious complaints made by a child, young person or their parent/guardian
- encouraging children and young people to 'have a say' on issues that are important to them

I will not

- Engage in any unlawful activity with or concerning a child and young person.
- Engage in any activity that is likely to physically, sexually or emotionally harm a child or young person.
- engage in rough physical games
- develop any 'special' relationships with children and young people that could be seen as favouritism, such as the offering of gifts or special treatment
- do things of a personal nature that a child or young person can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- discriminate against any child or young person because of age, gender, cultural background, religion, vulnerability or sexuality.
- Be alone with a child or young person unnecessarily.
- Arrange personal contact, including online contact, with children and young people I am working with for a purpose unrelated to our activities.
- Disclose personal or sensitive information about a child or young person, including images of a child or young person, unless the child, young person and their parent or legal guardian consent or unless I am required to do so by our policy and procedure on reporting.



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- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children or young people, or show or provide children and young people with access to inappropriate images or material
- Work with children and young people while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child or young person's harm or abuse.

If I notice or consider any person has breached this Code of Conduct, then I will

- Act to prioritise the best interests of children and young people.
- Take action promptly to ensure that children and young people are safe.
- Promptly report any concerns to my manager or Child Safety Officer, the Managing Director or another manager or leader in Respite with Linda.
- Follow policies and procedures for receiving and responding to complaints and concerns.
- Comply with Qld requirements if relevant and with policy and procedure on internal and external reporting

I have read the Child Safe Environments Statement, Child Safety Standards, and this Code of Conduct and agree to abide by these requirements during my employment. I understand that breaches of this Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action or termination of my employment.

Name	
Position	
Date	

Adapted from Child Safety Organisations National Principles