



Young Minds Matter Child Safe Environments Compliance Statement

Creation Date: 19/07/2022

Review Date: 19/07/2027

POLICY STATEMENT

Young Minds Matter is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people accessing our services and sites. Young Minds Matter recognises the importance of establishing and maintaining a safe, child friendly environment where all children and young people are valued and feel safe.

In order to strengthen this commitment Young Minds Matter is working towards embedding the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations* in its practice.

This policy complies with Young Minds Matter's obligations under the South Australian *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*, including Sections 114 and 115 of the Act, which requires organisations to establish and periodically review policies and procedures to ensure that:

- Child safe environments are maintained within the organisation; and
- Appropriate reports of risk of harm are made under Section 30 of the Act.

AIM

All persons working within Young Minds Matter will ensure the fundamental rights of children are respected and safeguarded. This will be achieved through establishing and promoting a commitment to maintaining safe, child friendly environments where safeguarding children is embraced and embedded in appropriate principles, behaviours and practices.

This policy will support all persons working within Young Minds Matter to effectively respond and consistently apply legislative and funder requirements in relation to the safety of children and young people.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all persons working within Young Minds Matter engaging Children and Young People.

Young Minds Matter encourages and respects the views of children and young people who access our services. We involve children and young people in making decisions that affect them. We listen to and act upon any disclosures, feedback or complaints that children, young people or their families/carers raise with us. They are also able to make a complaint via the Australian Counselling Association (ACA) if they so wish.

Young Minds Matter ensures that children, young people and their families/carers know their rights and how to access services, advice and the complaints processes available to them through written material.

Where there is contact with children and young people in State Care, the *Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care* will be observed and upheld.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of children and young people who participate in our services is paramount in ensuring their safety and wellbeing. Confidentiality, and limits of confidentiality, are explained both verbally, via written material ('What to Expect' sheet) and on the Young Minds Matter website (young-minds-matter.com.au)

Any issues relating to suspected or alleged harm to children and young people is highly sensitive and must be treated in such a way. All records are stored in safe way and all clinical notes are deidentified.

RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

If Young Minds Matter should engage other staff to work with children and young people a thorough selection and checking processes to safeguard children and young people would be undertaken; including referee checks, educational qualification check, National Criminal History Record Check and Working with children check (also known as *Child Related Employment Screening*) for people working with children and young people, as required in the South Australian *Children and Young People (Safety) Regulations 2016*.

SUPPORT, DEVELOP, SUPERVISE AND ENHANCE PERFORMANCE OF YOUNG MINDS MATTERS WORKERS

Young Minds Matters promotes a child safe environment via ongoing education and professional development to meet any mandated requirements.

All Workers are required to organise and participate in clinical supervision. Supervisors must meet ACA (Australian Counselling Association) or PACFA (Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia) accreditation requirements.

All workers will be expected to maintain their own Working with children checks and Clinical Supervision hours but with monitoring for compliance by Young Minds Matter.

MANDATORY REPORTING

Young Minds Matters ensures that all Workers who are mandated notifiers as per the South Australian *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* understand their obligations to notify the Department for Child Protection's Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78 as soon as practicable if they have a suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child and young person has or is being harmed or is at risk of harm.

Young Minds Matters recognises that the duty of care is not exhausted by making a notification and support might be required to enhance the child or young person's wellbeing when a notification is made and will identify appropriate services for the child, young person and/or their family.

Failure by mandated professionals and Workers to report a reasonable suspicion that a child has or is being harmed or is at risk of harm is in breach of the *Child Safe Environments Policy* and may result in disciplinary action being initiated against the Worker.

Mandated Notifiers have obligations under the South Australian *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* to:

- Notify the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) if they suspect, on reasonable grounds, that a child has been harmed or at risk of harm.
- Ensure they are aware of the obligations and the consequences of the obligations and the consequences of failure to comply.
- Ensure they are able to identify report and respond to children and young people at risk of harm.
- Support activities that embed the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

PROFESSIONAL PROTECTION AND SUPPORT FOR REPORTERS

Protection Under the South Australian *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*.

- Reporters of harm or risk of harm to children will not be held legally liable for the report or any investigation of the report if a report is made in good faith and does not constitute unprofessional conduct a breach of professional ethics.
- Mandated notifiers are also protected from 'threats, intimidation, damage, loss or disadvantage' because they have reported or propose to report suspected harm or risk of harm to a child or young person.
- Disclosure of the name or any identifying information in relation to a person who has made a report to the Child Abuse Report Line will not be made unless:
 - The reporter chooses to inform the child, young person or family.
 - The reporter consents, in writing that their identity can be disclosed.
 - The case proceeds to court. In these circumstances the source of the information may be provided in evidence to the court.
 - The identity of the reporter may be provided to a service if there is significant concern for the wellbeing of the child; however, the other service will not disclose the reporter's identity to others.

COMMUNICATION

Young Minds Matter ensures that this policy is publicly available on the Young Minds Matter website and that all clients and carers/families are informed of the policy and how to access it.

CODE OF CONDUCT

See Code of Conduct below.

RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

To minimise risk of harm to a client's wellbeing Young Minds Matter will ensure all Workers are appropriately trained and educated, maintain high ethical standards, ongoing education/professional development as well as supervision always when working with children, young people and their families.

Young Minds Matter will not: take images of children and young people without permission. Directly provide children and young people with access to social media or the internet. Initiate any physical contact, including hugging or shaking hands. Provide play equipment that may cause injury.

Young Minds Matter will: ensure all case notes are de-identified and kept locked away to protect privacy and confidentiality. Ensure that a child or young person under 16 years leaves the premises with a responsible adult.

Strategies are in place to make sure that child safety (through the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations) are embedded across the organisation.

The organisation uses inclusive, developmentally- appropriate language and resources to help children/young people to feel valued, respected and included.

When taking images of children and young people, must have consent of child 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.

If children and young people are harmed, we support them and their families by following our organisation's reporting and responding to harm/risk of harm procedure which clearly sets out the process for reporting to CARL and connecting those impacted with appropriate support services)

Where physical contact is required, this is undertaken in a safe way 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.

REVIEW OF THIS STATEMENT

This statement will be reviewed every 5 years. The next review date is 19/07/2027