Kensington Neighbourhood House

CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

Introduction

The Kensington Neighbourhood House is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children and young people who access programs at the House. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

Everyone

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy has been developed to protect and respect the children and young people who access programs at the Kensington Neighbourhood House (KNH). It ensures that staff and volunteers who work with children will act in the best interests of the children and young people in their care.

The underlying rationale of this policy is a commitment to child rights. We will base our attitude, approach and practice on an understanding of child rights when interacting with children.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child spells out the basic human rights without discrimination that children have everywhere. These are:

- The right to survival
- The right to develop to the fullest
- The right to protection from neglect, abuse and exploitation
- The right to participate fully in family, cultural and social life.

Scope

This policy applies to staff, volunteers, children and young people accessing the program and visitors.

For the purpose of this policy, children and young people include those under the age of 18 years.

Purpose

KNH:

- Is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people accessing programs.
- Is committed to ensuring a child-safe environment is maintained at all times.
- Believes that positive guidance and encouragement are important strategies for helping children learn respectful and positive behaviour.
- Is committed to giving all children the opportunity to expand their experiences that allows individuals the right to safety, tolerance, self-expression, cultural identity, dignity and worth.
- Supports the rights and needs of everyone by assisting children to understand the outcome and consequences of their behaviour on others.
- Endorses encouragement of individual social development of each child.

KNH understands that it has legal and moral obligations to protect children and young people in its care.

Policy

KNH believes that positive guidance and encouragement are important strategies for helping children learn respectful and positive behaviour.
Staff will assist children and young people to develop self-discipline, respect for others and for property. They will also assist children in knowing how to behave in an acceptable manner in everyday life situations so that they may develop self-respect and tolerance.

KNH is committed to promoting positive behaviour and values and reducing the risks of abuse and harm to children and young people. It will ensure all staff and volunteers are given a copy of this policy as part of their induction process. The induction process requires staff and volunteers to certify that they have read, understood and will comply with KNH’s policies and procedures.

All staff and volunteers are mindful that different and sometimes difficult behaviour may occur when a child first comes into the service and is undergoing separation from a parent or primary carer and attaching to someone else or others. All attempts will be made to ensure that this separation experience is managed as well as possible for the child, with the parent/carer encouraged to stay initially for periods of time and/or to leave and return for increasingly longer periods over a time frame.

Staff are also mindful that a child’s behaviour may be influenced by other conditions that may reflect a health or wellbeing issue, such as adjusting to a new sibling or an inability to effectively communicate. Staff should raise any concerns they have with parents as they arise. This will enable both parents and staff to work collaborative on strategies to assist the child and support health and a learning environment for the child.

If any staff member or volunteer fails to comply with this policy, the person who identifies the non-compliance must as soon as they become aware of the non-compliance report it to the Manager. The Manager will assess the severity of the non-compliance and determine whether any corrective or disciplinary action needs to be taken. Severe non-compliances may result in termination of the employee’s employment or the cessation of the volunteer’s engagement.

Procedure

1. Issue, Concern and Allegation Identification

All staff and volunteers must inform or notify their manager or supervisor about any concerns, allegations or suspicions that relate to the safety of children and young people.

The Manager or supervisor is the first point of contact for any staff or volunteer that has a concern about a child or young person. Staff and volunteers must also inform the Manager or supervisor any behaviour by staff, volunteers, parents, visitors or between children/young people that is concerning.

Once an issue, concern or allegation has been made the Manager will follow the Reporting and Notification flowchart procedure (see Appendix A).

2. Legal Requirements

All staff and volunteers who have direct contact with children as part of their responsibilities or studies at KNH require a current Working with Children Check in accordance with the Working with Childrens Act 2005.

The Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure must be adhered to when appointing staff and volunteers. This Policy and Procedure documents the recruitment and screening
practices required by Kensington Neighbourhood House to safeguard children and young people.
3. **Regulatory Compliance**

Staff and volunteers are responsible for specific service/program regulatory compliance, and must ensure that the KNH operates within regulatory obligations in relation to the provision of services and care to children and young people (eg. child care ratios, minimum qualifications etc).

4. **Internet Safety**

KNH does not allow children and young people to use email, social media or non-study related internet at any time during a programmed course or activity. Internet searches are permitted for study related purposes only and are monitored by staff and volunteers.

5. **Mobile Phones**

Students are permitted to leave mobile phones on silent should parents or carers need to contact them. Students are not permitted to use phones for social media or email purposes during a programmed course or activity.

6. **Drugs and Alcohol**

Drugs or alcohol are not permitted on the premises. Any participants, including staff and volunteers, who are found to be affected by alcohol or drugs, or found to be demonstrating inappropriate and unacceptable standards of behaviour as deemed by the KNH Manager or program co-ordinator will be prohibited from participating in programs or activities at the House.

7. **Code of Conduct**

Children and young people participating in programs and activities at KNH must abide by the House’s Code of Conduct. At enrolment all participants are required to complete and sign an enrolment form acknowledging willingness to comply with the Code of Conduct.

The Study Support Program has clarified acceptable behaviour to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone accessing the service. Students are required to read and sign the Student Code of Conduct attached to the enrolment form before commencing the program.

Any participants, including staff and volunteers, who are demonstrating inappropriate and unacceptable standards of behaviour as deemed by the KNH Manager or program co-ordinator will be prohibited from participating in programs or activities at the House.

8. **Behavioural Support**

It is important that behaviour management is consistent as this minimises confusion and ensures that children are clear about what behaviour is expected from them and from each other.

Staff and volunteers will use the following strategies to encourage consistent and positive behaviour:

- Staff will encourage appropriate behaviour by providing children with a positive role model through their own appropriate actions.
- Staff will use logical or natural consequences, according to the child’s development level. For example, if a child throws toys on the floor they are responsible for packing them away.
- Staff will talk in a calm but firm manner, indicating to the child what is expected and what choices the child has. Providing choices will help the child be part of the decision-making process.
- Children are encouraged to talk about feelings and how and why they might feel and act the way they do.
- Staff will use positive language to direct children, eg “walk inside” not “don’t run inside”.
- Staff will never accuse a child of being unacceptable. Rather the behaviour of the child is deemed acceptable or unacceptable. That is, staff should distinguish the action from the child – the child is always respected.
- Give attention to both parties involved in a dispute. Comfort the child that has been hurt and talk to the aggressor. Help empower the child that has been hurt to tell the aggressor how they feel.
- Acknowledge and accept the child’s feelings of anger, frustration or jealousy. Encourage the child to talk about their feelings and to understand that there is nothing wrong with feeling angry – it is the reaction to the anger, such as hitting, that is not acceptable.

**Responsibilities**

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<th>Role/Responsibility</th>
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| Board                 | • Approve the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, and any revised versions.  
                       | • Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation of the policy                                                                                                                          |
| General Manager       | • Maintain policy register and present any revised version to the Board for consideration  
                       | • Ensure co-ordinators and supervisors understand their obligations in accordance with the policy and procedures as part of their induction to the organisation.  
                       | • Assess any claims of breach of policy  
                       | • Determine course of action for breach of policy  
                       | • Maintain records of any claims of breach of policy, regardless of outcome as documented in Appendix A.  
                       | • Comply with the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure when appointing staff and volunteers.                                                                                                             |
| Co-ordinators/Supervisors | • Ensure implementation of policy and procedure within responsible program area, including the currency of Working with Children checks for each staff and volunteer  
                       | • Ensure staff and volunteers have access to this policy and related procedures and understand their obligations in relation to this policy  
                       | • Ensure staff and volunteers have access to advice and support to implement this policy, including incident management and report.  
                       | • Comply with the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure when appointing staff and volunteers.                                                                                                             |
Staff and Volunteers

- Implement the policy at all times
- Immediately report any suspected child safety and wellbeing concerns to management as per the Reporting and Notification flowchart in Appendix A.
- Obtain and maintain a valid Working With Children Check.

Related Documents
- Code of Conduct
- Study Support Student Code of Conduct
- Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Performance Management Policy and Procedure
- Legislation Compliance Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure

Approved by Committee of Management: August 2015

Proposed Review Date: August 2017
Appendix A

Child Safety and Wellbeing

Reporting and Notification Flowchart

If you see something...

say something to your Manager

- Do you have a reason to suspect a child/young person is at risk?
- Have you made an observation about something that seems unusual?

Report to External Authorities, as required by relevant legislation

Tell your manager
- Discuss with your manager if you need to complete an Incident Report Form
- Do you need to report it to external authorities

Manager: Review situation and determine appropriate course of action

- Review the issue and seek support or advice from Board
- After you have reviewed, is there evidence of an issue/concern?

Report to external authorities, as required.

Evidence of Major or Minor issue

- Is the report in relation to a major issue, such as child abuse, grooming, suspicious behaviour or other concern regarding the safety of children and young people?
- Is the report in relation to a minor issue, such as a minor procedure breach?
- Seek advice regarding contacting parents/guardians.
- Report to external authorities as required.

Evidence of no risk to children/young people

No action required (document process taken and advise the Board)

MAJOR/Critical ISSUE

Step 1: Log incident
Step 2: Formal investigation

Consider contacting Parents/Legal guardians

MINOR ISSUE

Step 1: Manage locally
Step 2: Keep adequate documentation

Decision/Outcome

Performance management/discipline/termination

Local monitoring and discussion/reminder about policy commitment

Consider the need for critical incident review

- Review formal investigation findings and make determination about appropriate outcome
- Report to external authorities, as required.