



POLICY	WORKING WITH CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE		
DOCUMENT REF	PS CYP 01	EFFECTIVE DATE	16 June 2022
RESPONSIBILITY	Board/ EO	REVISION NO.	Version 2

Purpose and Scope

This policy conveys the strong commitment of the Board and staff to the safety, protection and wellbeing of children and young people and in establishing child safe and child friendly environments, where all children and young people are respected, valued and encouraged.

It draws attention to the responsibility of all staff (paid and unpaid) to protect children and young people participating in Hut programs and services.

This policy reinforces that it is the duty of every person to ensure that children and young people be kept safe from harm and that this applies to all Hut workers, clients and other individuals involved in any Hut activities services or programs who are in contact with, or have access to, children.

We commit to having the policies, procedures and guidelines in place to achieve this commitment.

This Policy and associated procedures comply with the child safe provisions of the Children and Young People's (Safety) Act 2017, the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016* and the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*.

Definitions

Child/ren and Young Person	Reference in this policy means a person/s under 18 years of age
Harm	Section 17 of the Safety Act defines harm to mean physical harm or psychological harm (whether caused by an act or omission) such harm caused by sexual, physical, mental, emotional abuse or neglect. (Children & Young People's (Safety) Act) 2017
Duty of Care	The law says that if it is foreseeable that a person might suffer some sort of harm or loss because of something someone else does, or fails to do, then they owe that person a duty of care; the responsibility of Organisations to provide children in their care with an adequate level of protection against harm

National Police Check	(also known as a National Police Certificate (NPC) or National Criminal History Record Check) provides a summary of an individual's offender history in Australia and a record of their criminal history relating to convictions, finding of guilt or pending court proceedings.
Working With Children Check (previously known as DHS/DCSI Child Related Employment Check)	An assessment (conducted by the Department of Human Services Screening Unit) of whether a person is prohibited or not prohibited from working with children. The Working with Children Check is required under legislation for anyone working with children or young people or managing a program that involved children.
Staff	Paid employees and volunteers
Worker	Any person who carries out work for The Hut, including work as a staff member (employee or volunteer), contractor, subcontractor, self-employed person, out worker, apprentice or trainee, work experience student or employee of a labour hire company

Background & Scope

The Hut provides a range of services and programs to all ages and, in doing so, is responsible to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone involved. It is especially important to put into place safeguards that keep people safe who are at most risk of harm, and to ensure opportunity and resources are made available to enable everyone to have a voice and to access assistance when needed.

With this in mind, The Hut is responsible for the duty of care to children and young people while they are under the supervision of Hut staff, accessing our programs and services or participating in Hut activities.

This policy applies to everyone who accesses our programs, services and centre, including employees, volunteers, contractors, participants and clients. It is a requirement that people who use our centre and accesses our programs and services comply with this Policy and our *Working with Children and Young People Code of Conduct* with staff required to confirm this in writing prior to commencing.

It reflects The Hut's commitment to providing a safe environment where every person is embraced regardless of their race, religion, gender, abilities, sex or socio-economic or cultural background and has the right to engage in a safe and supportive environment.

Objectives

Children and young people's safety and welfare is of the utmost importance.

The Objective of this policy is to:

- meet The Hut's requirements under the Act to create and maintain a safe environment for children and young people;

- ensure that everyone who engages with us is treated with respect, is valued, and encouraged to achieve;
- ensure everyone has opportunity to have a voice and participate.

Policy Statement & Our Commitment to the Safety of Children & Young People

The Hut Board and management are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people accessing our programs, services, and venues.

We support the rights of the child and young person to be free from harm and will act without hesitation to ensure a child safe environment is always maintained.

The Board and management will ensure that:

- people will be treated with fairness and respect in an environment free from harassment and bullying
- best practice standards in the recruitment, management and screening of staff are employed, with all staff who have access to children and young people being appropriately screened according to their role and position;
- staff (paid and unpaid) are recruited and supported to have the skills and knowledge required to enact this policy and associated procedures;

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles for developing procedures relating to this policy are to:

- adhere to all legislative requirements;
- ensure the safety and welfare of children and youth are central in our planning and delivery of programs and services;
- ensure opportunities for children and young people to have their say about matters that affect them are created and supported.

Our Commitment to the Safety of Children & Young People

Hut Management (Executive Officer and Community Development Manager) and staff who work directly with children are mandated notifiers and will undertake the '*Safe Environments -Through Their Eyes*' and *Mandatory Notification* training every three years.

Employees will be recruited following a rigorous interview and selection process of a face to face interview panel and a minimum of two referee checks/qualification checks. Where appropriate to the position, behavioural questions in relation to child safeguarding will be included as a part of the interview process.

A 'not prohibited' clearance through the receipt of a current Working with Children Check issued by the Department of Human Services Screening Unit and, if an employee, a National Police Check Clearance are required prior to starting and will be kept current and renewed every five years. The type of screening that is

required will be determined by the Management team and dependent on the role of the employee/volunteer and identified in the job/role description.

Staff will have the skills and knowledge to understand and undertake their responsibilities in relation to this policy through formal training where appropriate for the position, staff meetings and inductions for new staff, performance meetings and annual performance reviews. Information of our commitment to child safety and wellbeing will be included in role specific Job Descriptions.

Risk Assessment

Child safety is considered a part of the overall risk management approach, regularly reviewing associated risks and implementing strategies to minimise, mitigate or manage risks as a part of the continuous improvement process.

Strategies to address risk are identified in our recruitment and selection processes, code of conduct for working with children and young people and inviting young people and their families to provide feedback.

The Programs team undertake, and annually review, a risk assessment for all programs accessed by children and young people and strategies to minimise or mitigate risk identified, implemented and reviewed.

Participation of Families, Children and Young People

Children and young people and their parents/caregivers are actively engaged in planning and decision making in a variety of ways. These include having a voice in strategic planning development and review through targeted consultation, opportunities for providing feedback when attending programs and activities in post attendance questionnaires, surveys and informal opportunities for feedback.

Where appropriate, young people and/or families of young people will be engaged through committees, working parties and forums.

Age and culturally appropriate language and activities will be used for all consultation with children and young people.

Access to *Service Users Rights and Responsibilities* document and the *Comments, Complaint and Feedback* forms and process is available on The Hut website and available in hard copy upon request.

Responsibility

It is a responsibility of all Hut staff, workers and every person to safeguard young and vulnerable people and ensure they are kept free from harm in a safe environment.

The Board has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place to identify and mitigate risks that could cause harm to a child or young person and that policies and procedures to support this policy are in place. These include having a Working with Children and Young People Policy and Child focused Code of Conduct. Both documents will be reviewed every three years and made available on The Hut's website www.thehut.org.au and available in hard copy upon request.

The Hut Executive Officer and Community Development Manager are responsible for developing and reviewing internal control systems, policies and procedures and ensuring that all staff are informed, appropriately trained and supported to comply with all policies, procedures and guidelines.

All staff and workers will be supported to be aware of their responsibilities through informal education at inductions and staff meetings and formal training where appropriate to their positions.

Communication

Information about providing a child safe and inclusive culture is included in inductions and the information pack (paid and volunteer) provided to new employees and volunteers. This includes an agreement to follow a child focused Code of Conduct outlining acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and consequences for non-compliance.

Policies are available for community or participants to view or download from www.thehut.org.au or upon request at The Hut Community Centre.

Reporting & Responding to Harm or Risk of Harm

Any member of staff or participant is able to make a formal report to the CARL hotline. Mandated notifiers are required by law to report a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

Reporting breaches of this Policy and the Code of Conduct are, in the first instance, made directly to the Executive Officer or through one of the Comments, Complaints & Feedback strategies (found on The Hut's website). A report against the Executive Officer is made to the Community Development Manager or a member of The Hut Board. A non-mandated notifier is encouraged to make a report and will not be influenced by a Hut worker as to their decision to notify.

Where suspected child abuse has occurred, the Executive Officer will support the notifier (either mandated or non-mandated) to make a report through the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78 or through their online reporting form or to the South Australian Police if the child is believed to be at immediate risk. The Executive Officer will ensure strategies are in place to follow the guidance that is provided by the Department for Child Protection or SA Police post notification.

Ongoing support will be made available to the notifier, and/or the child or young person and their family as required through either internal resources or external referrals as appropriate to the situation. This will include follow up phone calls/ face to face contact, and offer of counselling or referrals to an appropriate agency. Workers will be offered workplace counselling and will have follow up meetings with their line manager to assess further support required.

Where a Hut staff member/worker is the subject of a report, Management and the Board (where appropriate) will follow the internal complaints process and the process outlined in The Hut's Grievance Procedure. To ensure the safety and well being of the young person, the staff member in question will be removed from any further contact with the young person and any other vulnerable person until investigations have concluded (internal and external).

Related Documents (Internal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Recruitment & Selection, Induction & Exit Procedures · Working with Children & Young People Code of Conduct · Comments and Complaints Procedure · Program Development Plan · Working with Children and Vulnerable People Programs Risk Assessment · Information Sharing Guidelines · Grievance Procedure
Legislation & References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · National Principles for Child Safe Organisations · Children and Young People (safety) Act 2017 · Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 · Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (South Australia) Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth) · Health and Community Services Complaints Act 2004

Signed on behalf of Hut Board by Hut Chair:

Name: Loraine F Scheide

Signed:

Date:

Date Approved by Board: 16 June 2022

| Next Review Date: 16 June 2025