

Child Safe Environment Policy

APPROVAL	
	Approval Date: Feb 2024
Responsible Officer:	Directors
Administration assistance	Practice Manager
Next review due:	1/02/2028

1. Policy Statement

West Lakes Physio Sports and Rehab (WLP) is committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people accessing our services and sites. WLP recognizes the importance of establishing and maintaining a safe, child-friendly environment where all children and young people are valued and feel safe.

All persons working within WLP will ensure the fundamental rights of children are respected and safeguarded. This will be achieved through establishing a commitment to maintaining safe, child-friendly environments, appropriate behaviours, and practices whenever children are within the clinic. Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated.

This policy will support all persons working within WLP to effectively respond and consistently apply legislative and funder requirements about the safety of children and young people.

2. Statement of commitment to the safety and protection of children and young people.

To strengthen this commitment WLP is working towards embedding the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*.

This policy complies with WLP'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.

It also complies with our obligations under the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016*

3. Scope

This policy, from the date of endorsement, applies to all employees, contractors, volunteers and students working in West Lakes Physio-Sports and Rehab (WLP). The following policy principles guide WLP Directors and Workers in their commitment to child safety and strengthen the organisation's capacity to be child safe.

4. Engaging Children and Young People

This child-safe policy and related documents are available on our website and on request and provided as part of a welcome pack at the first visit.

This child safe policy and related documents are provided to all workers as part of their induction following recruitment.

We encourage and respect the views of children and young people and involve them in decision making as appropriate. We provide clear age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate explanations to children and young people including their right to safety, their right to be listened to and that they can provide feedback or make a complaint if they have a concern, to any worker or ask their parent/guardian to do this on their behalf. We will listen to and act upon any complaints or concerns that a child or young person raises with us.

We are committed to diversity, inclusion and eliminating discrimination in the provision of health services. We value all people irrespective of culture, faith, race, disability, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and gender identity.

5. Code of Conduct

All staff need to agree to comply with the WLP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct Policy (Appendix 1) before commencing employment. They need to sign the policy acknowledging they have read, understood, and agree to the policy. This policy outlines appropriate behavior to safeguard the well-being of all staff, children, and adults who attend the clinic. Breaches or suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct should be reported as soon as practicable to management either in person, by telephone on 8347 2043 or via email at practicemanager@westlakesphysio.com.au. Breaches or suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and dealt with quickly, fairly and transparently.

Any worker who breaches the Code of Conduct will face disciplinary action and depending on severity of the breach, the worker may have their employment terminated.

6. Recruitment practices

To ensure we engage the most suitable people to work with children and young people we have the following recruitment practices in place:

- our commitment to child safety is included in all job advertisements
- clear position descriptions that include our commitment to child safety and wellbeing
- written applications from applicants
- face-to-face interviews that use behavioural questions to determine the applicant's knowledge of child safeguarding
- at least 2 referee checks and qualification checks.

In accordance with the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016, our organisation is registered with the DHS Screening Unit and we link all Working with Children Checks (WWCC). All workers who will be working in a role with children and young people must hold a current, not prohibited WWCC issued by the Screening Unit of the Department of Human Services, provide evidence of this prior to employment and renew this every 5 years. We will verify the accuracy of all WWCCs in the DHS Screening Unit portal as required by law.

We will immediately contact the Department of Human Services Screening Unit when we become aware of certain information regarding any person involved with our organisation, including any serious criminal offence, child protection information, or disciplinary or misconduct information.

7. Support, develop, supervise and enhance the performance of West Lakes Physio-Sports and Rehab Workers

We have strategies in place to supervise, train and support workers to understand our organisation's child safe policy, their mandatory reporting obligations, how to build culturally safe environments and their responsibilities to create a child safe and friendly environment. Our strategies include:

- Training:
 - ensure all workers read and understand the Mandatory Notification Information Booklet available at: https://dhs.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/103179/CSE-Mandatory-notification-information-booklet.PDF during induction.
- Supervision:
 - regular supervision sessions that include a focus on child safety and wellbeing
- Support:
 - an induction process for all new workers including a copy of this policy document
 - regular performance appraisals that discuss child safeguarding

8. Mandatory Reporting

We aim to ensure that children and young people are safe from harm and risk of harm. Section 17 of the Safety Act defines 'harm' to mean physical or psychological harm (whether caused by an act or omission), including harm caused by sexual, physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect.

Mandated notifiers in our organisation are workers who:

- provide services to children and young people
- hold a management position in the organisation the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of those services to children and young people.

Mandated notifiers have a legal obligation to notify the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78 as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable belief that a child or young person is or may be at risk of harm. If the child or young person is 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.

Even if not a mandated reporter, any person can report harm or risk of harm to a child or young person. The individual who identifies the harm or risk of harm is encouraged to make the report to authorities and can request the support from another worker to do so if required.

Information about making appropriate reports of harm or risk of harm is available from the South Australian Department of Child Protection website:

<https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse>.

All adult workers (even if not a mandated notifier) have a legal obligation to report child sexual abuse to the police and to protect a child from sexual abuse. Failure to meet these obligations may be considered a criminal offence.

Following a report being made to CARL or SAPOL workers must make an internal report to management.

We will be guided by the Department for Child Protection and/or SAPOL after a report has been made as to whether we can conduct an internal investigation.

If a worker is reported to CARL or SAPOL for causing harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, they will be removed from any role that involves working with any child or young person until authorities have concluded their investigation.

Following a report to CARL or SAPOL we will support the child or young person by:

- referring the child, young person or their family to other appropriate services
- continuing to provide a service to the child, young person and their family and monitor their circumstances.

We will document all information received regarding the report and store this securely in a separate file.

9. Reporting and Responding to Complaints

Providing opportunities for complaints and feedback ensures that children, young people and their families feel valued and respected and enables us to improve the quality of our service.

Compliments, complaints or feedback can be provided verbally or in writing to any worker or direct to management either by telephone on 8347 2043 via email at admin@westlakesphysio.com.au, complete a feedback form and submit into the box left at reception, by talking to our reception staff who will record the feedback in writing if that is what the patient asks or by post addressed to Suite 1, 9 Charles St, West Lakes 5024.

We will deal with all complaints and feedback received from children, young people or their families promptly, sensitively and fairly. We will:

- listen to the complaint/feedback
- the person receiving the complaint will make a record of it if received verbally
- advise of the time expected for an outcome
- if a worker receives a complaint, they must forward it to management as soon as possible
- management will respond to the complainant with an outcome within 24 hours
- clearly document and securely store decisions and actions taken in response to complaints and feedback
- make sure that procedural fairness is followed at all times.

If the child, young person or their family is not happy with the outcome from the complaints process they can contact:

- Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner 8226 8666 or Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency 1300 419 495
 - Australian Human Rights Commission Online: www.humanrights.gov.au Tel: 1300 656 419
 - South Australian Equal Opportunities Commission (for complaints relating to discrimination) Online: www.eoc.sa.gov.au Tel: 08 8207 1977.

10. Risk Management

WLP will identify, assess and monitor all potential and actual sources of harm and take steps to minimise the risk to children and young people who use our services.

Identified risk	Actions to minimise risk
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<p>Culture of organisation is not child-safe focussed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child focused Code of Conduct is in place that sets the behavioural standards expected including what happens when a breach occurs • culture of management reflects our strong commitment to the safety of children and young people • the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations are embedded in policies and procedures • we meet the requirements of the <i>Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017</i> (which mandates child safe environments) and the <i>Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016</i> (which mandates Working with Children Checks)
<p>Organisational workers harm children/young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recruitment processes including undertaking referee checks to ensure the suitability of persons before they are employed/volunteer with our organisation • interview questions (no prior preparation) should gauge an applicant's understanding of child safe principles and actions that would be taken to prevent harm to children and young people • all workers have WWCC with 'not prohibited' result prior to working with children and young people • WWCCs updated every 5 years and status remains as not prohibited • children and young people and their families are given a copy of our Child Safe Environments policy and complaints and feedback process
<p>Organisational workers don't understand their obligations to report harm and risk of harm to the Child Abuse Report Line (or SA Police if child/young person is at immediate risk)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all workers must abide by the child safe environments policy and Code of Conduct (latter is signed on commencement with organisation) • ensure all workers read and understand the Mandatory Notification Information Booklet available at: https://dhs.sa.gov.au/ data/assets/pdf file/0003/103179/CSE-Mandatory-notification-information-booklet.PDF during induction.
<p>Physical contact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any physical contact must be appropriate to the delivery of services being provided • 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 • unnecessary physical contact is not allowed
<p>Online communications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cyber safety and social media guidelines are in place and provided to all workers • appropriate supervision is provided for all online activities • workers must not communicate with children or young people via social media
<p>Transport of children and young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • workers must not transport a child or young person unless specifically approved

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents/guardians must provide consent before transporting a child or young person • the worker must have a valid, unrestricted driver's licence • the vehicle must be registered, insured and in roadworthy condition • a worker must not be alone in a vehicle with a child or young person
Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children and young people are to be supervised by parents/guardians at all times • if child/young person not collected by parent/guardian at end of class/training, two adults are to stay with child/young person until they are collected • when providing one to one consultation with a child or young person, it will be in line of sight of another adult
Taking images of children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consent of child young person and their parent/guardian required • disclosure will be made as to how the image is to be used and consent must be provided by the child, young person and parent/guardian • images must be presented in a way that de-identifies the child or young person
Physical environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain a risk register that is reviewed annually to ensure effectiveness • conduct risk assessments for all activities • ensure all equipment is in good working order
Privacy and confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all documents containing confidential information will be stored privately in a locked filing cabinet (or similar place with restricted access) • digital files containing confidential information shall be protected electronically by restricting the access to only those requiring it to perform their duties • workers must not disclose information regarding any child or young person without written consent of the child, young person and their parent/guardian
Overnight and/or off-site activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consent of parent or guardian must be given • children and young people must be supervised by a minimum of 2 adults of the same gender as the children attending • privacy when children or young people are bathing, toileting and dressing must be provided • children and young people will not be left under the supervision of unauthorised persons • sleeping arrangements will not compromise the safety of children or young people such as unsupervised sleeping arrangements, or children or young people sharing a bed or an adult sleeping in the same bed as a child or young children and young people have the right to contact their parents, or another adult, if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or distressed during the stay

11. Communication

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

WLP Workers are provided a copy of this policy as part of induction and are required to sign that they have read, understood, and will abide by the WLP *Child Safe Environments Policy*. This is managed and documented in our compliance records.

12. Related Documents

Document Title
CSE-Mandatory-notification-information-booklet. https://dhs.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/103179/CSE-Mandatory-notification-information-booklet.PDF
Appendix 1. WLP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct Policy
WLP Candidate Checks Clearances and Renewals Policy
WLP Privacy Policy
WLP Incident and Complaint Procedures
National Principle for Child Safe Organisations
Child Safety (Prohibited Persons Act 2016 https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/Children%20and%20Young%20People%20(Safety)%20Act%202017.aspx
Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/Children%20and%20Young%20People%20(Safety)%20Act%202017.aspx

13. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed on an as-needed basis, or every four years, whichever is earlier. The Practice Manager will be responsible for initiating this process with the assistance of the Director for any modifications.

Review activities will ensure alignment with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

We will lodge a new child safe environments compliance statement with the Department of Human Services each time we review and update this policy.

Appendix 1

Code of Conduct

Caring for children and young people brings additional responsibilities for workers. All workers are responsible for promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:

- sticking to the organisation's child safe policy at all times and taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people
- treating everyone 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 conduct with them
- setting clear boundaries about appropriate behaviour between yourself and children and young people – boundaries help everyone to understand their roles
- listening and responding appropriately to the views and concerns of children and young people
- being alert to bullying behaviours and responding promptly and appropriately
- ensuring another adult is always present or in sight when conducting one to one consulting, coaching, instruction or other activity
- being alert to children and young people who have been harmed, or may be at risk of harm and reporting this quickly to the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78)
- responding quickly, fairly and transparently to any 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.

Workers must not:

- 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.