

Alison Marriott, Speech Pathologist

Child Safe Environment Policy

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Description	This policy sets out the principles, objectives and responsibilities for Marriott Speech Pathology to provide Child Safe Practices

Child Safe Environment Policy

I aim to provide an environment that minimises the risk of children being harmed in anyway while in my care. I understand that child abuse thrives in secrecy, therefore to prevent child abuse; I will develop and maintain an open and aware culture where children and their families are aware of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, and I will advocate for children when I visit work places to ensure that practices are child safe.

I believe I have a responsibility to defend my client's right to care and protection and I follow all procedures recommended by child protection authorities. I commit to regularly update my knowledge in the area of abuse or neglect of children to ensure that I act appropriately when dealing with any allegation. I will also document any evidence of neglect or abuse which may have occurred in other work sites and record any intervention that has arisen as I advocate for child safe practices with families and other work sites. I will follow set procedures so that a child is protected from harm.

Child Safe Allegations are a serious matter and I understand that people have a right to confidentially unless the allegations of abuse are substantiated.

Rationale

I understand I have a duty of care to act immediately to protect and preserve the safety and wellbeing of the children in my care. I will implement and adhere to set child protection policies and procedures outlined in Alison Marriott Policy Documents.

Child abuse includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse. I understand the nature of child abuse, and have an awareness of how and why some children are victimised. I will ensure that my knowledge is updated regularly.

As part of the wider community, I have a responsibility for children's safety to develop Child Safe policies I have established an environment that minimises risks and sets out clear

safeguards to ensure children's protection by setting clear protocols and procedures to follow.

Strategies

I will ensure clear observation of child occupied areas through the following means:

- Inclusion of parent/guardian or primary support person at all times unless there is a compelling reason not to do this
- Where the parent/guardian or primary support person is not present in the room, the door is kept ajar or the blinds open to allow monitoring, and the adult is welcome to join sessions at any time.
- Where the above conditions are unable to be met for compelling reasons, an agreement must be written up with the parent that ensures appropriate measures are taken and a strategy is in place (for example: real time video monitoring or recording).

Validity and Training of Staff

All staff at Kensington Osteopathy are required to present a current DCSI working with children check. I regularly renew my DCSI working with children check and maintain my RAN (Reporting Abuse and Neglect) training requirements that requires me to undertake a training each three years. I continue to ensure:

- I am knowledgeable about current legislation and reporting requirements related to child protection and maltreatment and that a system for reporting and recording suspicious incidents is in place
- I understand my current responsibility as mandated reporters
- I access current information about the procedures to be taken in relation to allegations of child abuse or neglect.
- Ensure the Reporting Abuse and Neglect Handbook is referred to on a regular basis to recognise signs of abuse or neglect and to remind me of the possible signs of child abuse, and the procedures to follow if a child in my care displays behaviour or physical signs that could indicate abuse has taken place. In addition, it is important to regular review policies, procedures and confidentiality requirements in regard to child protection

Children's education and empowerment

I will:

- foster children's self-esteem and positive self-image through my interaction and relationship with children, and their guardians
- role model appropriate behaviour and language
- build relationships with all children based on trust and will empower children to discuss and communicate their needs and concerns.

- listen to children's verbal and non-verbal language to ensure they are comfortable and welcome feedback from guardians.

Practices and Procedures

General principles to be applied in the event that protective concerns arise

I am a mandated reporter, but any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection may report their concerns to the Child Abuse Report Line. This means any person, including non-mandated licensed children's services are able to make a report when they believe that a child or young person is at risk of harm and in need of protection, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

Reporting concerns

If I form the view that protective concerns exist; I will act on this straight away by making a report, if required, or advocate for children so that safe practices are implemented for my clients.

I will decide whether or when to notify the family involved that I intend to make a report. When the suspected abuse involves severe physical injury or sexual abuse, the family will generally not be notified before a report is made. I will be guided by Child Protection as to if, and when to notify the family.

I have a right to take any action to ensure that children are safe at all times. This may involve contacting the police if any person or family makes threats against me.

As part of the standard procedure, I will make document any concerns and action taken.