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CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS POLICY

SUMMARY:

Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services is committed to the safety and well-being of children and young people accessing our services. The welfare of children will always be of a high priority. This policy will support all persons working within Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services to effectively respond and consistently apply legislative requirements to ensure the fundamental rights of children and young people are respected and safeguarded.

APPLIES TO:

All Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services employees, volunteers, students and contractors.

EXCEPTIONS:

No Exceptions.

REPLACES:

No prior policy.

LEAD WRITER/KEY CONTACT:

Nicole Arbuckle

COMPLIANCE REVIEW PERIOD:

Every 5 years

DATE OF POLICY:

20/2/2023

REVIEW DATE:

20/2/2028

STATUS:

DHS Approval Granted

ENDORSED BY:

Department of Human Services

DATE OF ENDORSEMENT:

17/03/2023

Child Safe Environments Policy

1. Purpose

This policy will support all persons working within Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services to effectively respond and consistently apply legislative requirements. All persons working within Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services, including, employees, volunteers, contractors and students, will ensure the fundamental rights of children are respected and safeguarded. This will be achieved through establishing and promoting an organisational wide commitment to maintaining a safe, child friendly environment where safeguarding children is embraced and embedded in appropriate principles, behaviours and practices.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services sites and all persons working within Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services, whether they are mandatory reporters or not, including, employees, volunteers, contractors and students.

3. Policy Statement

Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services is committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people accessing our services and the welfare of children will always be of a high priority. Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services ensures the inclusion of all children and young people, regardless of their abilities, sex, gender, or social economic or cultural background, with a commitment to equity. Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services acknowledges that the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations 2019 define an environment that is safe for children and young people as being one where:

- Child safety and wellbeing is consciously considered and promoted.
- Engagement with children and young people is genuine and valued.
- Conditions within the environment reduce the likelihood of harm while increasing the likelihood that any risks of harm will be identified.
- Any concerns, allegations or disclosures made about the risk of harm are dealt with appropriately.
- Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated.

This policy complies with Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services obligations under the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 and the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 which requires organisations to establish policies and procedures to ensure that:

- Child safe environments are maintained within the organisation; and
- Appropriate reports of harm or risks of harm are made.

4. Principles

The following policy principles guide Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services, employees, volunteers, contractors and students in their commitment to child safety and strengthen the organisation's capacity to be child safe:

4.1 Safeguarding Culture

Safeguarding of children and young people in Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services is promoted through a range of strategies and initiatives aimed at developing an organisational culture, environment and activities that are safe for all children and young people.

4.2 Children's Empowerment and Participation

Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services encourages and respects the views of children and young people who access our services. We involve children and young people in decision making and listen and act upon any feedback or complaints that children, young people or their families/carers raise with us. Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services 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. All service users are provided with age/developmentally appropriate information during their first appointment and advised of our complaints policies and procedures in an age/ developmentally appropriate way. Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services use age/developmentally appropriate feedback forms and ensures support is provided to the children, young people or their families/carers when providing feedback or making a complaint.

4.3 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. Any issues relating to suspected or alleged harm to children, young people, is highly sensitive and must be treated in such a way.

All records are stored in accordance with Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services Privacy Policy. The release of images of, or other personal information of a child or young person to the public has the potential to adversely impact their safety and well-being as it could disclose their whereabouts to a potential perpetrator. As such, Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services will obtain permission from a child or young person where possible, and their parent/guardian before taking an image of the child or using personal information supplied.

When gaining consent, the child or young person and their parent/guardian are informed about the nature of the use of the image as well as how the image will be stored and how the image can be accessed by the parent/guardian.

All personal information and images are held and stored in accordance with Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services Privacy Policy.

4.4 Recruitment Practices

Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services ensures that it engages the most suitable

and appropriate people to work with children and young people through a comprehensive human resource selection and checking process to safeguard children and young people. The following screening measures are undertaken:

- Job descriptions with clear commitments to child safety and wellbeing.
- In person interviews that include behavioural questions on child protection
- At least two referee checks for all prospective employees
- All who provide services to children and young people are required to hold a current and non-prohibited Working with Children Check.
- Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services will verify WWCC online to ensure they are current and not prohibited before employment commences.
- Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services will verify WWCC for employees every five years to ensure the status remains as not prohibited.
- Verification will be done online through the Organisation Portal accessed via the DHS Screening Unit.
- A current Safe Environments Through Their Eyes Training Certificate.
- Training in child safe policies and procedures.
- Acknowledgement through signature of Child Safe Code of Conduct.

Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services will immediately contact the Department of Human Services Screening Unit when they become aware of any information regarding any person involved with Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services, including any serious criminal offence, child protection information, or disciplinary misconduct information.

4.5 Support, Development & Supervision

Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services promotes a child safe environment through provision of employee development programs that ensure mandated notifiers are equipped and supported to enhance and maintain a child safe environment:

- All employees undergo an induction process that includes new personnel receiving a copy of this policy and that is clear on their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.
- All employees undergo regular performance appraisals and access debriefing.
- All employees of Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services who work with children and young people are provided with on-the-job supervision, support and training to ensure they can maintain a child safe environment and are able to identify and respond to harm or risk of harm.
- All employees of Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services are encouraged to access additional external professional supervision.
- All employees who are mandated notifiers attend Safe Environments Through Their Eyes training and Responding to Risk of Harm, Abuse and Neglect Education and Care (RRHAN-EC) training, renewing their training within three years of completing the full day course to remain up to date on their mandatory reporting obligations.
- New employees who are mandated notifiers undergo Safe Environments Through Their Eyes training and Responding to Risk of Harm, Abuse and

Neglect Education and Care training and receive a copy of Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services Child Safe Environments Policy, Privacy Policy and Code of Conduct.

- All employees who are mandated notifiers receive appropriate and regular training sessions that include a focus on ongoing learning about child protection practices and requirements.
- Volunteers and Students are required to provide evidence of completion of the full Safe Environments Through Their Eyes training and Responding to Risk of Harm, Abuse and Neglect Education and Care training prior to commencing a placement in Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services and receive a copy of the Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services Child Safe Environments Policy, Privacy Policy and Code of Conduct.
- All personnel read and understand the Mandatory Notification Booklet (https://dhs.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/82659/cse-mandatory-notification-information-booklet-2019-dhs-update.pdf)
- All personnel view and understand the resources Keeping our kids safe, developed by SNAICC at <https://www.snaicc.org.au/policy-and-research/child-safety-and-wellbeing/keeping-our-kids-safe/>
- Child safety remains a standing item on meeting agendas.
- All employees receive professional development opportunities to build knowledge and skills regarding the wellbeing and development of children and young people.

4.6 Identify, Report & Respond

Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services advises that mandated notifiers at Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services include:

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

Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services ensures that all relevant employees and people are:

- aware that they have a legal obligation to report immediately if they have a suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child and young person has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed.
- aware of the reporting details for the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) 13 14 78 or SA Police on 000 if a child or young person is at immediate risk.
- informed that the person who identifies the harm is the person to make the report to CARL/SA Police.
- In cases involving Aboriginal children and young people, support is provided Yaitya Tirramangkotti – an Aboriginal team, via the CARL number.
- Personnel will be guided by the relevant authority (CARL/SAPOL) if an internal investigation is appropriate.
- Aware of relevant internal reporting policies, including:

- Contacting Nicole Arbuckle
- Completing a concerns check list and mandatory reporting check list
- Completing an incident report
- Completing a Mandatory Notification Report in line with Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services policy.
- Aware that if someone within Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services is reported for causing harm to a child or young person they will be immediately removed from any role that has contact with children or young people until authorities have concluded their investigation.

SA! Therapeutic Services recognises that support may be required for the child or young person when a notification is made and will identify appropriate services for the child, young person and/or their family. This includes the provision of appropriate and relevant external services and continuing to provide a service to the child or young person and their family and monitoring their circumstances.

Failure by mandated employees and people to report a reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed is in breach of the Child Safe Environments Policy and the Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 section 64A which states that failure to report child sexual abuse may result in a maximum penalty of 3 years imprisonment and section 65 which states that failure to protect a child from sexual abuse may result in a maximum of 15 years imprisonment. and may result in disciplinary action being initiated against the employee/person. Failure by mandated notifiers to report is also an offence under the various State Children's Protection Legislation and carries a maximum penalty of a \$10,000 fine.

For more information about mandatory reporting, refer to:

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

Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) 131 478.

4.7 Professional Protection and Support for Reporters

Protection under the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 provides that reporters of harm or risk of harm 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 or 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 of a child or young person.

Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services ensures that support is also available for employees making notifications.

4.8 Strategies to Minimise Risk

Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services will identify and assess all potential and actual sources of harm and take steps to minimise the risk to children and young people who use our services. Strategies to minimise risks to children and young people occur as part of Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services ongoing risk management process.

Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services have implemented the following policies and procedures to assist in managing risk and safeguarding children and young people:

- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Complaints, Disputes and Feedback Policy
- Complaints, Disputes and Feedback Policy
- Risk Management Plan

4.9 Communication

Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services communicates their commitment to maintaining a Child Safe Environment by:

- Ensuring that The Child Safe Environment Policy and Privacy Policy are publicly available on the Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services website and that all clients and carers/families are informed of these policies and how to access them.
- Ensuring that Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services employees are required to sign that they have read, understood, and will abide by the Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services Child Safe Environments Policy and Code of Conduct. These documents will be filed in the employee's personal file.
- Ensuring that information for making a complaint or providing feedback is accessible on our website and provided to families and individuals during intake appointments and is written into service agreements provided on commencement of services.
- Children, families and young people can make complaints and provide feedback directly to the director by
 - Emailing us directly at nicole@letsplaysatherapeuticservices.com.au
 - Calling us on 0400 256 222

The director will:

- Listen to the complaint/feedback and make a record of it.
- Advise the time expected for an outcome (typically within 7 days)
- Respond to the complainant with an outcome.
- 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 person making the complaint, dispute or providing feedback would like to speak to someone independent of Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services, they can contact:

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)

- Phone 1800 800 110
- Email feedback@ndis.gov.au
- Visit one of their offices in person.

The Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner (HCSCC)

- Phone 8226 8666 or 1800 232 007
- Make an HCSCC complaint online.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Nicole Arbuckle (Director) is responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies, procedures and effective internal control systems are in place, and:

- Ensuring that all employees, volunteers, contractors and students are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct.
- Ensuring that all adults within the Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services community are aware of their obligation to report suspected harm or risk of harm of a child or young person in accordance with these policies and procedures.
- Ensuring that all employees, volunteers, contractors and students are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety).
- Providing support for employees, volunteers, contractors and students in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

All Managers must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety at all times.
- Assess the risk of harm within their area of control and eradicate / minimise any risk to the extent possible.
- Educate employees about the prevention and detection of harm and risk of harm.
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected harmful activities.

Management should be familiar with the risks of harm that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

All employees, volunteers, contractors and students share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of risks of harm or cases of harm, and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services policy and procedures in relation to child protection; and comply with all requirements.

6. Policy Review

Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services will, at a minimum, review the policies and procedures once every five years as required by the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017. Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services will

lodge a new child safe environments compliance statement with the Department of Human Services each time they review and update their policy.

They will review this policy when:

- New or added risks are identified for children or young people, which may require a change in policy or procedures.
- A critical incident where a child or young person has experienced harm through involvement with Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services
- Concerns are raised by anyone involved with child safety and welfare within Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services
- Awareness or compliance to the child safe policy and/or procedures is low.
- Legislative changes/ requirements

Next review date: February 2028

Version	Date	Writer	Amendment/s	Status
1.0	20/02/2023	Nicole Arbuckle		Draft
1.1	8/3/2023	Nicole Arbuckle	Update on legislation	2 nd Draft
1.2	13/3/2023	Nicole Arbuckle	Advised amendments	3 rd Draft
1.2	17/03/2023	Nicole Arbuckle	Nil	Approved

RISK ASSESSMENT

CATEGORY	Clinical	Financial	Workforce	Legislative	Organisational	Reputational
Consequence				4 - High	4 - High	4 - High
Likelihood				1 - Low	1 - Low	1 - Low
Risk Rating				Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Description						

Overall Risk Rating	Moderate
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Referencing	
National Standard/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Principles for Child Safe Organisations National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

<p>Definitions and Acronyms</p>	<p>Harm Taken to mean physical harm or psychological harm (whether caused by an act or omission) and, without limiting the generality, includes such harm caused by sexual, physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect.</p> <p>Risk of harm A child or young person will be taken to be at risk if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child or young person has suffered harm of any kind • There is a likelihood that the child will suffer harm • Or there is a likelihood that the child or young person will be removed from the State to undergo a medical or other procedure that would be unlawful if performed in SA; or taking part in a marriage ceremony that would be a void marriage, or would otherwise be an invalid marriage, under the Marriage Act 1961 of the
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	<p>Commonwealth; or Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parents or guardians of the child or young person are unable or unwilling to care for the child or young person; have abandoned or cannot, after reasonable inquiry be found; or are dead; or the child or young person is of compulsory school age but has been persistently absent from school without satisfactory explanation of the absence; or the child or young person is of no fixed address; or any other circumstances of a kind prescribed by the regulations exist in relation to the child or young person <p>Child or young person Person under the age of 18</p> <p>Child Safe Environment State and Commonwealth Legislation requires organisations to provide a child safe environment. A child safe environment which is both child-safe and child-friendly, where children are valued and feel respected and encouraged to reach their full potential.</p> <p>Working with Children Check Is a decision about whether a person is suitable to work with children based on the person's criminal history (if any) and the risk assessment of harm to children who receive a service from the organisation. (Refer to Employment Screening Procedure for additional information)</p> <p>Employee a person employed for remuneration under a contract of employment (Definition under the Fair Work Act 1994)</p> <p>Mandatory Notifiers</p>
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	<p>ection 30 of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 establishes that the following people are mandated notifiers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • medical practitioner • pharmacist • registered or enrolled nurse • dentist • psychologist • police officer • community corrections officer under the Correctional Services Act 1982 • social worker • minister of religion • person who is an employee of, or volunteer in, an organisation formed for religious or spiritual purposes • teacher employed as such in a school (within the meaning of the Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011) or a pre-school or kindergarten • employee of, or volunteer in, an organisation that provides health, welfare, education, sporting or recreational, child care or residential services wholly or partly for children or young people, being a person who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides such services directly to children or young people • holds a management position in the organisation, the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of those
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	<p style="text-align: center;">services to children or young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• officer or employee of a prescribed organisation (as per section 114) who holds a management position in the organisation, the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of services to children.
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	<p>Volunteer a person who volunteers for a service or activity which is of benefit to the organisation where there is no financial gain for the individual.</p>
Legislation	<p>Child Protection Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016</p> <p>Working with Children Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016</p> <p>Child Employment Education Act 1972 (SA) governs the age at which a child attends compulsory schooling and stipulates that children cannot be employed during school hours.</p>
References	Nil
Related Documents	<p>Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services Child Safe Environments Code of Conduct</p> <p>Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services Privacy Policy</p> <p>Let's Play SA! Therapeutic Services Complaints Policy</p> <p>Risk Management Plan</p>
Consumer Health Information	Nil