

# Child Safe Policy



## Purpose of this policy

Amorism has developed this policy to acknowledge that all children and young people have a right to safety, protection, and hearing. As an organisation and a sole clinician, I have a duty of care to keep children and young people safe and protect them from harm.

This policy demonstrates a commitment to child safety and outlines the principles, scope and actions required to ensure that all children who access a service from Amorism are kept safe and their rights are upheld.

## Our Children

This policy is designed to empower children and young people who are vital and active participants at Amorism. They are involved when making decisions, especially about matters directly affecting them. Their views are acknowledged and respected.

Amorism promotes diversity and acceptance, and people from diverse lifestyles and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular, Amorism:

- promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and young people
- promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children and young people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensures that children and young people with a disability are safe and can participate equally.
- bullying and harassment will not be tolerated.

## Commitment to Child Safety

We are committed to the safety of children and young people and are guided by the following:

- Children and Young People (Safety) Act of 2017), and the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016*
- United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child  
<https://www.unicef.org.au/our-work/information-for-children/un-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child>
- Keeping Our Kids Safe: <https://www.snaicc.org.au/policy-and-research/child-safety->

[and-wellbeing/keeping-our-kids-safe/](#)

- Mandatory Reporting Information Booklet:  
[https://dhs.sa.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/103179/CSE-Mandatory-notification-information-booklet.PDF](https://dhs.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/103179/CSE-Mandatory-notification-information-booklet.PDF)
- Child Wellbeing and Protection standards  
<https://www.aasw.asn.au/document/item/2215>
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations:  
[https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-02/National Principles for Child Safe Organisations2019.pdf](https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-02/National%20Principles%20for%20Child%20Safe%20Organisations2019.pdf)

Guiding principles include:

- We want children and young people to be safe, happy and empowered.
- We support and respect all children and young people, as well as our staff.
- We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children and young people.
- We have zero tolerance of harm or risk of harm to children and young people, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.
- We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child or young person's safety, which we follow rigorously.
- We are committed to preventing harm or risk of harm of children and young people and identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.
- We are committed to regularly training and education on child abuse risks.

We are committed to all children and young people are embraced regardless of their abilities, sex, gender, or social economic or cultural background and equity is upheld.

#### **Scope of policy**

This policy applies to all employees, contractors and volunteers collectively referred to throughout the policy as staff. All staff will be required to agree in writing to accept and act in accordance with this policy at recruitment or at the start of their contract.

#### **Communication**

As per Chapter 8 (Section 114(5)) of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act of 2017), We must provide, on request, a copy of any child-safe policies and procedures prepared for or adopted by Amorism to clients, including children and young people, their families, and potential future staff.

This information is communicated via Amorism's website alongside appropriate posters displayed in waiting areas. Children, young people, and parents/guardians receive a service

information sheet on intake. The child-safe policy is noted in the consent form, which is provided to the parent/guardian on induction. This information is discussed with the child/young person, and parent at the first session and clients are made aware that they can ask for further information, provide feedback or make a complaint at any time. Staff are provided with a copy of this policy at recruitment.

### **Participation of Families, Children and Young People**

Through the induction process, families, children, and young people are made aware of their right to participate in all aspects of the service they are receiving. This includes understanding their rights and responsibilities, the clinician's rights and responsibilities, provision of feedback and how to raise complaints and concerns.

These processes are made accessible through the provision of a child-friendly information sheet, the information contained in the consent form, complaints information provided at induction, children's rights posters in the waiting area.

### **Code of Conduct**

We have a code of conduct that specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children and young people. All staff must abide by the Code of Conduct. This is available on the Amorism website [Amorism Code of Conduct 12.2022.pdf \(wsimg.com\)](#) or on request.

A breach of the Code of Conduct can be reported:

- in person to any member of staff
- by phone to 0423 329 471
- via email to [dolly.amoroso@outlook.com](mailto:dolly.amoroso@outlook.com).

If a staff member breaches the Code of Conduct disciplinary action may be taken or depending on severity of breach, termination of employment may result.

### **Recruitment**

- The recruitment strategies at Amorism ensure we only engage the most suitable people to work with children and young people. We do this by ensuring:
  - all position descriptions include a commitment to child safety and wellbeing
  - face-to-face interviews include behavioural questions in relation to child safeguarding
  - we conduct at least two referee checks.

- Amorism meets the requirements of the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016* which requires that staff and volunteers have a current, 'not prohibited' Working with Children Check issued by the DHS Screening Unit
- Amorism will verify the accuracy of the Working with Children Check before employing staff to work with children and young people, and for existing employees, Amorism will verify they renew their Working with Children Check every 5 years and the status remains as not prohibited. Verification will be done online through the Organisation Portal via the DHS Screening Unit
- Amorism will advise the Screening Unit if the organisation becomes aware of certain information regarding any person involved with the organisation, including any serious criminal offence, child protection information, or disciplinary or misconduct information.

### Supervision, Support and Training

- Supervision
  - Amorism will include regular on-the-job supervision sessions that include a focus on child safety and wellbeing
- Support
  - an induction process that includes new employees/volunteers receiving a copy of this policy and the Code of Conduct and that is clear on their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations
  - regular performance appraisals
  - appointing a child safety officer who has an educative role within our organisation
- Training
  - Amorism will ensure all staff and volunteers read and understand the [Mandatory Notification Information Booklet \(see: https://dhs.sa.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/103179/CSE-Mandatory-notification-information-booklet.PDF\)](https://dhs.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/103179/CSE-Mandatory-notification-information-booklet.PDF)
  - require mandated notifiers to attend a 'Safe Environments: Through Their Eyes' training course every 3 years or Responding to Risk of Harm – Education and Care (RRHAN-EC) training every 3 years
  - require all staff and volunteers to view the resources Keeping our kids safe at developed by SNAICC at <https://www.snaicc.org.au/policy-and-research/child-safety-and-wellbeing/keeping-our-kids-safe/>
  - include child safety as a standing item on meeting agendas

- provide access to web-based resources about issues concerning child safety and wellbeing
- professional development opportunities to build knowledge and skills regarding the wellbeing and development of children and young people.

## Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, families, or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it and who will have access to it. This is intended to protect mandated reporters and to ensure that all members/clients of Amorism are comfortable to disclose any allegations or concerns in relation to child safety without repercussions.

## Reporting and Responding to Risk of Harm

Mandated notifiers in our organisation are those who provide a service directly to children or young people and anyone who holds 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 report reasonable belief that a child or young person has been or is at risk of harm to the Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78 or if immediate risk, call SA Police on 000. The person who identifies the harm is the person to make the report.

Factors contributing to reasonable belief may include:

- a child or young person states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child or young person may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of harm or risk of harm but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

Following a report to either CARL or SA Police, an internal report is required to be made to the Director. If a staff member is reported for harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, they will be removed from any role that has contact with children and young people until authorities have concluded their investigation.

We will continue to support a child, young person and their family following a report being made by:

- referring the child, young person or their family to other appropriate services
- continuing to service the child or young person and their family and monitoring their

circumstances.

## Responding to Complaints and Feedback

Feedback and or complaints will be taken seriously and responded to in a timely manner.

We explain to children, young people and their families at their first appointment using age appropriate language that we welcome feedback and complaints to improve our services.

Feedback or complaints can be made:

- in person to any member of staff
- by phone to 0423 329 471
- via email to [dolly.amoroso@outlook.com](mailto:dolly.amoroso@outlook.com).

The complaint and feedback procedure includes a commitment to:

- listen to the complaint/feedback and make a record of it
- advise the time expected for an outcome
- 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.

## Risk Management

In South Australia, organisations must protect children and young people when a risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks to children and young people.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise risks of harm and risks posed by physical environments and online environments.

Strategies include:

Use of child-safe space and materials, including:

- minimising obstructions and sharp edges where possible,
- toxic cleaning products kept out of reach of children and young people
- children and young people are supervised by a parent/ guardian in the waiting area and, at times, in sessions where appropriate and required
- all materials used for therapeutic intervention are child friendly and non-toxic
- toys and child friendly tools are used in session to support the child/young person to express their needs/concerns.

- No access to social media or internet in sessions
- No photos/digital images are taken of children or young person's in sessions or in the production of marketing material.
- Documentation of risks, issues of concern when required.
- Privacy and confidentiality guidelines are maintained
- Concerns are raised with the safe parent or guardian as required.
- Children and young people are often provided services in spaces without a parent or guardian – risk of harm is minimised by the parent/guardian remaining on premises. The child/young person understands they have the right to have the parent/guardian in the counselling room at any time they wish or may leave the counselling room at any time.
- We will not touch a child or young person during intervention and where somatic work may take place, the use of props such as cushions and toys will be used in lieu of physical touch.
- If the child seeks physical comfort from the clinician, the clinician acknowledges and directs the child to safe touch, such as a high five and will report this contact to the parent upon completion of the session.
- Online telehealth services are provided only with parent/guardian in close proximity ensuring the child is safe. We can contact the parent/guardian at any time should concerns be raised for the safety of the child or young persons in session. All telehealth sessions include informing the child/young person of their rights and how to keep safe online.

Risks are assessed the following ways:

- Psychosocial and familial assessment
- Mental Health Status Exam
- Professional judgement
- Child/young person and parental feedback
- Engagement in supervision sessions to monitor and develop safe practice
- Regular site audits to ensure the space is child-safe and child friendly

### **Regular Review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years and significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families, children and young people have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we will do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

Section 115 of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 requires us to review the

child-safe environments policies and procedures at least once every five years. Amorism may also wish to review the policy when:

- new or added risks are identified for children or young people, which may require a change in the policy or procedures
- a critical incident where a child or young person has experienced harm through involvement in the organisation
- concerns are raised by anyone involved in your organisation about child safety or welfare in the organisation
- awareness or compliance with the child-safe policy and/or procedures is low.

Each time we review and update our child safe environments policies and procedures, we must create a new lodgment in the Child Safe Environments Compliance System on the Department of Human Services website. See: [www.dhs.sa.gov.au/cse](http://www.dhs.sa.gov.au/cse).

Date: 26/04/2023

Review due: 26/04/2025

I, Dolly Amoroso, agree to abide by the Amorism Child Safe Policy:

Signed: *Dolly Amoroso*