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Child Safe Environment Policy for Spill the Beans Speech Pathology Services

Purpose: This policy outlines the commitment of Spill the Beans Speech Pathology Services, as a sole trader, to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and young people. The protection of children is a shared community responsibility and involves developing stronger communities that are more child-friendly and child-focused to help ensure that all children are safe and protected at all times.

Commitment: As a sole trader at Spill the Beans Speech Pathology Services, I am strongly committed to prioritizing the safety, wellbeing, and rights of all children and young people. I am dedicated to creating a child-safe environment that protects children from harm and promotes their dignity and respect. My policy complies with the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017, the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 and aligns with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

I value and respect children and young people and welcome them regardless of their abilities, sex, neurotype, gender, faith or social economic or cultural background. Bullying and harassment won't be tolerated.

Scope of Policy: This policy applies to all interactions and services provided by Spill the Beans Speech Pathology Services. This policy applies to myself as the sole trader of Spill the Beans Speech Pathology Services.

Communication:

This Child Safe Environments policy is provided to every family upon commencing a service with me and each time this policy is updated. It is also available on our website at www.spillthebeansspeech.com and to anyone else upon request.

I value and support the perspectives of children and young people, involving them in decision-making whenever appropriate. I offer clear, age-appropriate explanations regarding their rights, including the right to safety, to be heard, and to give feedback or raise concerns, either directly or through a parent or guardian. I am committed to listening to and addressing any complaints or concerns they share with me.

Code of Conduct / Key Responsibilities

Caring for children and young people comes with added responsibilities for me. I am tasked with promoting and safeguarding their safety and well-being by:

- adhering to Spill the Beans Speech Pathology Services' child safe policy at all times and taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people
- I will take both child and family centred approaches to care. The best interests of the child or young person are our foremost concern. Children will be encouraged to express their views and have a say in decisions affecting their care and services.
- 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
- I will practice cultural safety and inclusion by respecting and valuing the diverse cultural backgrounds of children and their families. I will promote culturally safe practices, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.
- Maintaining confidentiality and privacy of my clients by sharing information only as required by law or for the safety of the child.
- being a positive role model to children and young people in all conduct with them
- setting clear boundaries and maintaining appropriate behaviours with 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

I must not:

- engage in rough physical games or restrictive practices
- 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 for a child/young person i.e toileting or changing clothes. Spill the Beans Speech Pathology strictly provide speech pathology services. Clinic toilets are not supervised by the speech pathologist. Toileting is entirely the responsibility of the parent/carer regardless of the age of the child. No staff member is permitted to enter a toilet with a client at any time.
- use my personal device to take photos or videos of clients without knowledge of, and explicit consent from, the client and/or their parent or carer. Photos and videos may only be used for professional practice or supervision purposes – for example, videoing a child’s speech to consult with a supervising clinician in order to seek advice regarding therapeutic strategies and interventions. Any photos or videos must be immediately added to the client’s clinical notes and deleted from the staff member’s device. No videos or photos of clients may be uploaded to the staff member’s personal online platforms (including YouTube and social media).
- discriminate against any child or young person because of age, gender, cultural background, religion, vulnerability or sexuality.
- Breaches or suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct can be reported as soon as practicable to me either in person, by telephone on 0433 920 654 or via email at spillthebeanssp@gmail.com . Breaches or suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and dealt with quickly, fairly and transparently.

Recruitment

I am a sole trader with no employees or volunteers. In accordance with the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016, I hold a current, ‘not prohibited’ Working with Children Check issued by the Screening Unit of the Department of Human Services which permits me to work with children and young people in South Australia and will renew this every 5 years (next due for renewal in 2029). As my business structure is currently operated as “sole trader” no form of formal employment of others will occur.

Training, Supervision and Support for Workers

To maintain my knowledge regarding child safe environments I:

- will undertake professional development on child safety, including recognizing signs of abuse and understanding reporting obligations.

- Will stay informed about current child protection laws and best practices.
- have read and understand the Mandatory Reporting Information Booklet available at https://dhs.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/103179/CSE-Mandatory-notification-information-booklet.PDF
- will complete 'Safe Environments Through their eyes' and 'Responding to Risk of Harm, Abuse and Neglect' training every 3 years.

Reporting and Responding to Harm or Risk of Harm

I 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.

I am a mandated reporter under Section 30 of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017. I understand my legal obligation to notify the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78 as soon as practicable if I have a suspicion that a child or young person has been harmed or may be at risk of harm. If the child or young person is at immediate risk, I will report to South Australia Police (SAPOL) on 000.

Information about making appropriate reports of harm or risk of harm is available from the South Australian Department for Child Protection website: <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse>.

I understand as an adult worker, I 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.

I will be guided by the Department for Child Protection and/or SAPOL after making a report.

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

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

I will document any concern or incidents in the client file. I will document all information received regarding the report and store this securely in a separate file.

Reporting and Responding to General Complaints or Feedback

Providing opportunities for complaints and feedback ensures that children, young people and their parents/guardians feel valued and respected and enables me to

improve the quality of my service. Children, young people and their families are informed that they can provide feedback or make a complaint at their initial service planning call and first appointment.

Compliments, complaints or feedback should be directed to me, either in person, by telephone on 0433 920 654 or via email at spillthebeanssp@gmail.com

I will handle all complaints and feedback promptly, sensitively, and fairly by:

- Listening to the concerns expressed
- Providing a timely response to the complainant with the outcome
- Clearly documenting and securely storing decisions and actions taken regarding the complaints and feedback
- Ensuring that procedural fairness is maintained at all times.

Where my response about a complaint is not considered sufficient or appropriate, further advice/support can be obtained through the following agencies:

- Speech Pathology Australia via: [Making a complaint \(speechpathologyaustralia.org.au\)](http://speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)
- Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner 8226 8666
- 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.

Risk Management

Physical contact

- any physical contact must be appropriate to the delivery of services being provided. For example, during sessions, there may be circumstances where it is necessary for a clinician to have physical contact with a child. For example:
 - For instruction purposes (e.g. touching a child's face to use the PROMPT technique)
 - For assessment purposes (e.g. looking inside a child's mouth using a tongue depressor for oro-motor assessment)
 - As part of an activity (e.g. holding a child's hands while they stand on a wobble board)
- The clinician will act in an appropriate manner, maintaining the client's safety at all times. 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

Online communications

- appropriate supervision is provided for all online activities
- I will not communicate with children or young people via social media

Supervision

- children and young people are to be supervised by their parents/guardians at all times
- if providing one to one consultation with a child or young person, it will be in line of sight of another adult
- If a support person has a compelling reason not to be in the room, the SP will ensure visual and/or at minimum auditory monitoring by other adults at the facility. This will be done by keeping the door to the clinic room open.

Taking images of children and young people

- 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

- 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

- 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
- I will not disclose information regarding any child or young person without written consent of the child, young person and their parent/guardian unless required to by law.

Related Policies & Procedures

- Code of Conduct
- Privacy Policy
- Risk Management Policy

Policy Review

I will, at a minimum, review this policy and the related procedures once every 5 years as required by the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017. I will also review this 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 my organisation about child safety or welfare in the organisation
- awareness or compliance to the child safe policy and/or procedures is low
- in line with legislative changes and best practices.

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

Implementation:

As a sole trader, I commit to adhering to this policy and promoting a culture of child safety within Spill the Beans Speech Pathology Services.

Contact Information:

For questions or concerns regarding this policy, please contact Tennille Loxton through phone 0433 920 654 and email spillthebeanssp@gmail.com

This policy is effective as of 15/10/2024 and was created by Sole Trader of Spill the Beans Speech Pathology Services.

Planned review date for Policy: 15/10/2029