



## CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS POLICY

### Purpose

Children and young people have a right to always be always safe from harm or at risk of harm. This includes when accessing services in the community. Child safe environments are safe and friendly settings where children and young people are protected and feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. This policy sets out the minimum safety framework and environments that reSPond Speech Pathology adheres to.

### Commitment to the Safety of Children and Young People

I am committed to providing a safe environment to all children and young people. My policy complies with the following;

- Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017
- The Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- The South Australian Equal Opportunity Act 1984
- The (Commonwealth) Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- The South Australian Office of Guardian for Children and Young People
- Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care
- The Council of Australian Governments, National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children

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

### Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all people involved with reSPond Speech Pathology, including myself and the sole trader, children, young people, parents, guardians and families.

### Communication

People accessing services from reSPond Speech Pathology should understand how a child safe environment is provided, and the obligations on how to respond when children are harmed or at risk of harm. This child safe policy and related documents are available on my website at [www.respondsp.com.au](http://www.respondsp.com.au), and can be provided upon request.

I am aware of the importance of my own responsibility in upholding this policy and understand that I am a mandatory reporter.

I encourage and respect the views of children and young people and involve them in decision making as appropriate. I 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 or ask their parent/guardian to do this on their behalf.

reSPond Speech Pathology has created and sustains an open and aware culture where the sole trader and children are aware of appropriate and inappropriate behaviours. Refer to SPA Code of Ethics.



reSPond Speech Pathology is guided by child safe environments in The National Framework for Creating Child Safe Environments whereby a child safe organisation consciously and systematically:

- Creates an environment where children's safety and wellbeing is the centre of thought, values and actions.
- Places emphasis on genuine engagement with and valuing of children by using age appropriate and neurodiversity affirming language and inviting feedback from children about their experiences (informally through parent/caregiver conversations and feedback)
- Commits to diversity whereby children and young people of different races, ethnicities, gender, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes and religious beliefs are respected, and equity is upheld.
- Creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people.
- Creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm.
- Responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations, or suspicions of harm.
- Creates an environment in which any bullying and/or harassment of children will not be tolerated.

### Code of Conduct

Caring for children and young people brings additional responsibilities for myself. I am 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.

I 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.

Breaches or suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct can be reported as soon as practicable to me either in person, by telephone on 0497 257 872, or via email at [rachel@respondsp.com.au](mailto:rachel@respondsp.com.au).

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 (WWCC) 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 I will renew this every 5 years.

### **Training, Supervision and support for Workers**

To maintain my knowledge regarding child safe environments I:

- have 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](https://dhs.sa.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/103179/CSE-Mandatory-notification-information-booklet.PDF)
- have completed Safe Environments: Through their eyes 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 notifier 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 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, I will 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.

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>.

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 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 first appointment.

Compliments, complaints or feedback should be directed to me, either in person, by telephone on 0497 257 872 via email at [rachel@respondsp.com.au](mailto:rachel@respondsp.com.au) or by post addressed to PO Box 2935, Port Lincoln SA 5606.

I will manage all complaints and feedback received from children, young people or their families promptly, sensitively and fairly and will:

- listen to the complaint/feedback
- respond to the complainant with an outcome in a timely manner
- 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.

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

- Australian Commercial Disputes Centre (ACDC) 02 9239 0700
- 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](http://www.humanrights.gov.au) Tel: 1300 656 419
- South Australian Equal Opportunities Commission (for complaints relating to discrimination) Online: [www.eoc.sa.gov.au](http://www.eoc.sa.gov.au) Tel: 08 8207 1977.

### Risk Management

Identified risk	Actions to minimise risk
Culture of organisation is not child-safe focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I have a strong commitment to the safety of children and young people</li><li>• the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations are embedded in this policy</li><li>• I 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> and maintain a current, not prohibited Working with Children Check</li></ul>

I don't understand my 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am trained in Safe Environments – Through their Eyes and complete refresher training every 3 years</li> <li>I abide by the child safe environments policy and Code of Conduct</li> </ul>
Physical contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>any physical contact must be appropriate to the delivery of services being provided (e.g. oral motor assessment for speech/swallowing concerns).</li> <li>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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>unnecessary physical contact is not allowed</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Online communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>appropriate supervision is provided for all online activities</li> <li>I will not communicate with children or young people via social media</li> </ul>
Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>children and young people are to be supervised by parents/guardians at all times</li> <li>when providing one to one consultation with a child or young person, it will be in line of sight of another adult</li> </ul>
Taking images of children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consent of child young person and their parent/guardian is required, using a written consent form which is then saved on the client file</li> <li>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</li> <li>images must be presented in a way that de-identifies the child or young person</li> </ul>
Physical environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conduct risk assessments for all activities</li> <li>ensure all equipment is in good working order</li> </ul>
Privacy and confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all documents containing confidential information will be stored privately in a locked filing cabinet (or similar place with restricted access)</li> <li>digital files containing confidential information shall be protected electronically</li> <li>I will not disclose information regarding any child or young person without written consent of the child, young person and their parent/guardian</li> </ul>

### Related Policies and Procedures

This policy must be read in conjunction with the following documents, policies and/or Procedures:

- Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017
- Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016
- The National Framework for Creating Child Safe Environments
- reSPond Speech Pathology Complaints Policy
- Speech Pathology Australia Code of Ethics



- Mandatory Notification Information Booklet
- Professional Standards for Speech Pathologist in Australia
- Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner Code of Conduct for Certain Health Care Workers
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

### **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 your organisation about child safety or welfare in the organisation
- awareness or compliance to the child safe policy and/or procedures is low
- legislative changes/requirements.

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

Policy Date: 07/01/2024

Review Date: 07/01/2029