



Wakefield Sports Clinic

Child Safe Policy

Wakefield Sports Clinic's Child Safe Policy

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1. Purpose

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the management and its employees and contractors to child safety and establishing and maintaining child safe and child friendly environments.

2. Context

This policy reflects our commitment to provide a safe environment where every person has the right to be treated with respect and is safe and protected from abuse.

It complies with our obligations under the *Children's Protection Act 1993*, including:

- Section 8B – 8D – Child Safe Environments and criminal history assessments for people working with children; and
- Section 11 – Mandatory reporting.

It also complies with the Child Safe Environments: Principles of Good Practice and Standards for dealing with information obtained about the criminal history of employees, contractors and volunteers who work with children issued by the Chief Executive of the Department for Families and Communities.

3. Scope

This policy, from the date of endorsement, applies to all employees, children, parents, carers and other individuals involved in Wakefield Sports Clinic.

4. Commitment to child safety (include risk management)

All children who come to Wakefield Sports Clinic have a right to feel and be safe.

We are committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people accessing our services and the welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority.

We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where all children are valued and feel safe.

5. Children's participation

Wakefield Sports Clinic employees and contractors encourage children to express their views, and make suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect children.

We actively encourage children who use our services to 'have a say' about those things that are important to them. We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.

We teach children what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children, or their parents, raise with us.

6. Recruitment practices

Wakefield Sports Clinic takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children.

We interview and conduct referee checks on all employees and contractors.

We conduct criminal history assessment for people working with children, as set out in section 8B of the *Children's Protection Act 1993*.

We ensure that criminal history information is dealt with in accordance with the standards developed by the Chief Executive of the Department for Families and Communities.

In the event that an employee, contractor, volunteer or applicant is not willing to consent to a criminal history assessment, or does not have a valid assessment of their criminal history report or other acceptable evidence, Wakefield Sports Clinic will preclude the individual from working with children in a prescribed position.

Our procedure for conducting criminal history assessments is provided in Appendix 1.

7. Code of Conduct

All employees and contractors at Wakefield Sports Clinic will:

- o Treat everyone with respect and honesty (this includes staff, volunteers, students, children, young people, parents and caregivers).

- o Remember to be a positive role model to children and young people in all your conduct with them.

- o Set clear boundaries about appropriate behaviour between yourself and the children or young people present or being treated in the Practice.

- o Ensure children and young people understand their rights and explain to the child or young person in age-appropriate language what they can expect during the consultation, particularly where treatment involves physical contact.

- o Ensure that where diagnosis or treatment requires an image of a child or young person to be taken, the child, young person and their parents or carers (where applicable) clearly understand the way the image will be used. Permission must be obtained before any images are taken.

- o Follow the Practice Child-Safe policy and guidelines for the safety of children and young people.

- o Raise any concerns, problems or issues with management as soon as possible.

- o Record and act quickly, fairly and transparently on complaints of abuse or other serious complaints made by a child, a child, young person or their parent/guardian.

- o Notify the **Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78** as soon as practicable if staff have a reasonable suspicion that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected.

- o All employees and contractors will not:
 - Take part in any unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person
 - Discriminate against any child or young person because of age, gender, cultural background, religion, vulnerability or sexuality.
 - Develop any 'special' relationships with children or young people outside of the professional relationship

8. Support for employees, contractors and volunteers

Wakefield Sports Clinic seeks to attract and retain the best employees and contractors.

We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated.

We ensure that employees and contractors who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training so that their performance is developed and enhanced to promote the establishment and maintenance of a child safe environment.

All physiotherapists need to comply with mandatory professional development as outlined by the Physiotherapy Board of Australia.

9. Reporting and responding to suspected child abuse and neglect

Wakefield Sports Clinic will not tolerate incidents of child abuse.

All employees, contractors and volunteers understand their obligation to notify the Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78 as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable suspicion that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected by a member of their family.

We ensure that employees, contractors and volunteers are aware of how to make appropriate reports of abuse or neglect. We also provide opportunities for employees, contractors and volunteers to attend an information session on mandatory reporting.

From time to time we provide opportunities for staff to attend information sessions about these mandatory reporting obligations. We also ensure that staff have

access to relevant information resources available from the Department for Families and Communities, including:

- o Guidelines for Mandated Notifiers (available to view or download from www.families.sa.gov.au/childsafe)

- o Department for Families and Communities' reporting child abuse website: <http://www.dfc.sa.gov.au/pub/default.aspx?tabid=485>.

Child Protection is everyone's responsibility. This Practice recognises that even where a report is made, we may still have a role in supporting the child or young person. We ensure that support is also available for the staff member making the report, particularly where an ongoing service is provided to the child, young person and their family.

Employees, contractors and volunteers must also report to the practice management or the partners any reasonable suspicion that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected by another employee or contractor.

Staff of this Practice have a duty of care to report any concerns about the behaviour of a staff member to management even if they are not mandated notifiers under the *Children's Protection Act 1993*.

10. Strategies to minimise risk

Wakefield Sports Clinic provides physiotherapy services to a relatively small number of children. Children are always accompanied by the parent or carers therefore the likelihood of any risk event is low.

We treat some teenagers one on one and in class sessions without parents or carers present – risk is medium.

At any time, any of our physiotherapists could treat children and young people as.

We have approximately seven administration staff who do not have regular contact with children or provide any physiotherapy services to them, but do have access to children's records.

Wakefield Sports Clinic has a reception area where children often play whilst waiting for parents who are in the treatment room. Our staff are never required to supervise these children as they will be under the supervision of a parent or carer. The reception area is within sight of administration staff and the risk is low.

This practice takes steps to minimize the risks to children or young people due to the actions or omissions of staff, contractors or other people within our practice. We review our risks regularly to address any new or emerging risks in order to maintain a safe environment for children and young people.

Strategies we have implemented to minimize and control risks to children and young people include:

- o High risk situations which are referred to in our code of conduct (see Paragraph 6 of this policy)

- o All staff are required to abide by this practice's child safe policy
- o Staff must consider whether a parent or chaperone is required to be present when treating a child or young person
- o Staff are made aware of and are responsive to the particular needs and vulnerabilities of children and young people (such as age, language barriers, developmental capabilities, disability, mental health, trauma or abuse)
- o Staff provide clear age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate explanations to children and young people about the consultation and allow for questions prior to examination.
- o Staff ensure that where diagnosis or treatment requires an image of a child or young person to be taken, the child, young person and their parents or carers clearly understand the way the image will be used. Permission is obtained before any images are taken.
- o This practice responds to any concerns that children, or their families or carers raise, quickly and fairly.
- o This practice ensures that patient records, including images of children and young people, are securely managed and stored in accordance with practice policy and relevant legislative requirements.
- o In some cases, children with a history of significant abuse or neglect may display signs of developmental trauma as a consequence of the previous abuse and/or neglect. Staff are aware that in these cases, additional care may be required to explain and 'walk' the child and their parent or carer through normal treatment procedures which may include the need for practitioners to request the child to
 - Remove articles of clothing to enable assessment and treatment
 - Allow close physical contact as part of the examination and/or treatment
 - Participate in the taking of images intended to assist with diagnosis and treatment.
 -

Evaluation of these strategies and the development of additional strategies to minimize and control risks to children and young people occurs as part of our ongoing risk management process.

11. Harassment/bullying

Wakefield Sports Clinic opposes all forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying. We take this issue seriously and encourage anyone who believes that they, or another person, has been harassed, discriminated against or bullied to raise this issue with management.

12. Communication

Wakefield Sports Clinic will ensure that everyone to whom this policy applies is aware of and has had an opportunity to read the policy.

We also ask employees, contractors, volunteers and parents (where appropriate) to sign a written statement indicating that they have read and will abide by our child-safe policy. We retain a copy of all signed statements.

13. Related policies and procedures

- Code of conduct
- Statement to be signed by employees, contractors, volunteers and parents indicating they have read and will abide by this policy – refer Appendix 2.

Conducting criminal history assessments

Assessments required for prescribed positions

All staff of this practice who occupy a prescribed position (as set out under section 8B (8) of the Children's Protection Act 1993) are required to undergo a criminal history assessment once every three years.

Criminal history assessments are also required prior to the appointment of new staff members to prescribed positions. This includes all staff who regularly work with or around children in an unsupervised capacity or have access to children's medical records.

Procedure for conducting criminal history assessments

A satisfactory criminal history assessment is a precondition of working in a prescribed position at this practice.

Prior to the appointment of a new employee or contractor and then at three yearly intervals, this Practice will direct the applicant/employee/contractor to obtain a National Police Certificate (NPC) from South Australia Police. The cost of obtaining a NPC is the responsibility of the applicant.

South Australia Police require the explicit written consent of the applicant prior to the release of criminal history information. The NPC application form is available from http://www.police.sa.gov.au/sapol/services/information_requests/national_police_certificate.jsp.

Where a person has no disclosable criminal history, the assessment is successfully completed and no further action in respect to an assessment is required.

Where an individual does have a criminal history, this practice assesses this information in accordance with Standard 5 of the *Standards for dealing with information obtained about the criminal history of employees, contractors and volunteers who work with children*.

Each assessment is conducted on its individual merits and with consideration to the inherent requirements of the position. Principles of procedural fairness and natural justice are applied throughout the decision-making process and the individual is provided an opportunity to confirm or dispute the information contained within the report and to provide contextual information for consideration during the assessment process.

Criminal history information will not be retained once a decision has been made regarding the person's suitability to work with children. No criminal history information will be retained beyond three months.

In accordance with its legal requirements, this Practice will retain the following information regarding its decision:

- That a criminal history report was obtained
- How the criminal history information affected decision making processes

- Statutory declarations (where applicable)

The Practice may obtain a further criminal history assessment for an employee or contractor at any time that the Practice believes it necessary or desirable for the purpose of maintaining a child safe environment.

Other evidence

Where appropriate, this Practice may utilise a number of forms of evidence (obtained within the last three years) to assess a person's suitability to work with children. This includes:

- A National Police Certificate that does not expressly state that it cannot be used as a clearance to work with children
- A letter of clearance to work with children from the Department for Families and Communities Screening Unit)
- A valid and current interstate working with children check.

Acceptance of other forms of evidence is at the discretion of this Practice and is subject to the person completing a 100-point check to confirm the true identity of the applicant.¹

This Practice may also at its discretion seek a statutory declaration for any employee(s), contractor(s) or volunteer(s) who have been citizens or permanent residents of another country other than Australia since turning 18 years of age.

¹ A 100-point check should include one primary document such as a Birth Certificate or International Travel Document (e.g. Current Passport) or Citizenship Certificate and must include one secondary document such

as a Driver's Licence, employee identification card, Centrelink card or student identification card.

APPENDIX 2

Statement to be signed by employees and contractors indicating they have read and will abide by this policy.

Employee/Contractor Memorandum of Understanding (Child Safe Policy)

I _____ of _____

have read and understand Wakefield Sports Clinic's Child Safe Policy for Physiotherapy Practices.

I am fully aware of my responsibilities to implement this policy. I am also aware of where to locate Wakefield Sports Clinic's Workplace Policy Manual.

Signed by	Name (print)	Date
Sighted by	Name (print)	Date

National Police Check

Employee/Contractor	NPC Date	Review Date
Sighted by	Name (print)	Date