

## MACEDON RANGES CHILDREN'S THERAPY (MRCT) AND SPORTS PHYSIO & ACTIVE REHAB (SPAR) CHILD SAFE POLICY

This Child Safe Policy was revised in April 2017 in preparation to meet compliance requirements as Registered Providers of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. It should be read in conjunction with the Physiotherapy Board of Australia's code of conduct (March 2014 see Section 3: Working with Patients and Clients), which highlights specific examples of how to work with Children and Young People.

This Policy is intended to inform all staff (therapy and support staff) who are involved with the above mentioned businesses and to ensure they will be able to meet their legal obligations in regards to the relevant legislation.

<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/betrayal+of+trust+implementation#breadcrumbs>

This policy demonstrates the strong commitment of the Director and staff to child safety and to provide an outline of the policies and practices that we adhere to keep everyone safe from harm, including abuse.

### **Commitment to Child Safety**

All Children who receive therapy services from MRCT and SPAR have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children we work with will always be our first priority and we have a zero tolerance to child abuse. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe, have fun and improve their ability to participate in their chosen pursuits.

This Policy was developed in collaboration with all our staff and in due course children, their families and their care providers will also be given the opportunity to have input into this policy.

### **Children's rights to safety and participation**

MRCT and SPAR's staff encourage children to express their views. We listen to their suggestions, especially in matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all children who use our services to "have a say" about things that are important to them. We listen to and act on any concerns children or their parents/caregivers raise with us. (See feedback forms). We inform children what they can do if they feel unsafe and undertake thorough risk assessments to try and avoid these situations.

**Valuing Diversity**

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this we:

- welcome children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation
- seek to promote cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (including Aboriginal children) and their families
- seek to acknowledge and remedy any instances of discrimination that we become aware of in relation to our service provision

**Recruiting staff**

SPAR applies the best practice standards in the screening of all staff. We conduct referee checks on all staff and require police checks and Working with Children Checks for relevant positions.

**Supporting staff**

SPAR provides support so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We adhere to the Physiotherapy Board of Australia Code of Conduct, which provides extensive guidance to our staff.

**Reporting a child safety concern or complaint**

All staff have access to the document, ‘A Step by Step Guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child First’ and will be supported to do this. In addition, Sue Cautley has been given the responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, parents or children in relation to child safety. Please refer to the specific complaints process – MRCT Complaints and Incident Reporting policy.

**Risk Management**

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to the children we work with. For instance:

1) Children who are not accompanied by a parent/guardian will be treated in the open gym areas of the facility to ensure there is opportunity for observation by another adult
2) Reception staff and other therapists will be made aware when a child is not accompanied by a parent/guardian and will periodically observe the treatment session so that both the practitioner and child feel safe
Children who receive services off site must have an adult /guardian with them at all times, unless another adult is present at the facility in the role of constant observer e.g. a lifeguard
Children who are not fully independent in tasks of personal care will need to have a parent /guardian with them at all times who will assume responsibility for this task.
Therapists will only be involved for assessment/treatment purposes of tasks of personal care e.g. toilet transfers with another adult present

Children who have difficulties communicating will have a parent/guardian with them during the treatment session and be encouraged to inform the therapist of how best to facilitate communication e.g. teach them about their device or include therapy specific phrases in their communication system
Specific consent will be sought from both the child and parent/guardian if photos/videos are taken of children for clinical decision making if this is required.
The storage of this will be mutually agreed upon and may include storage on an individual USB that is stored in a locked area.
Key staff to receive training in Culturally responsive practice and implement learning throughout organisation.

### **Reviewing this policy**

This policy will be reviewed every two years and we undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from children, parents, carers and staff.

### **Assistive Support Services recognised below;**

Translating and Interpreting Service

<https://www.tisnational.gov.au/>

Physiotherapy Board of Australia Code of Conduct

<http://www.physiotherapyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines/Code-of-conduct.aspx>

**This policy follows the guidelines outlined in the attached Appendix;**

**Appendix A – Tip Sheet; Child Safe Organisations, Safety of Children with a Disability from Commission for Children and Young People**

**Appendix B – A Step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST, a joint protocol of the Department of Human Services Child Protection, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Licensed Children's Services and Victorian Schools**

SPAR and MRCT's Complaints and Incident Reporting Policy