

Bethany Care Ltd

# Child & Youth Risk Management Strategy

Policy &amp; Procedure 6

Upholding the legal and human rights of each child with a disability and taking action to prevent and/or respond to allegations of abuse and neglect

Document Review Details	
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<b>Reviewed by</b>	Brian Lynch (Quality Assurance)
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<b>Amendment History</b>	Updated to B to include the mandatory requirements from "Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy" - Working With Children Check from Queensland Government

## 1. Object & Field of Application

1.1 This document details the policy adopted by Bethany Care Ltd to manage the potential risk of child and young people abuse.

## 2. References

- a) Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian (CCYPCG)
- b) Linda Graff – Risk Management Training <http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/OQPChome.htm>
- c) Australian Council for Children and Youth Organisations (A CCYO)

## 3. Legislation

- Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000
- Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011
- Child Protection Act 1999
- Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000

## 4. Requirement 1 - Statement of Commitment

- 4.1. Bethany supports the rights of children and young people and is committed to providing a safe and supportive service environment directed at ensuring their safety and wellbeing.
- 4.2. We are committed to an organisational culture which upholds the protection of children from harm, abuse and exploitation.
- 4.3. In order to support this commitment, Bethany is dedicated to a child and youth risk management strategy to effectively address the safety and wellbeing of children in our care.
- 4.4. This policy is based upon the following principles:
  - The safety of children is the paramount consideration
  - Children are the most vulnerable members of our society. The presence of a disability increases this vulnerability factor
  - Children need to know and believe that they have the right to feel and be safe at all times
  - Children are entitled to basic human rights regardless of special needs, cultural, or socioeconomic factors
  - Children are people in their own right deserving of respect, care and protection
  - Children are entitled to the support of a person to act as an advocate on their behalf

## 5. Requirement 2 - Code of Conduct for Interacting with Children

These standards apply to all members of the Bethany organisation (employees, volunteers, consultants, Board members, children and young people, parents, visitors, spectators, students on placement).

### Staff and volunteers must adhere to the following codes

- 5.1. Take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- 5.2. Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- 5.3. Report all allegations of abuse and neglect to using the procedure outlined in the Bethany document "Human\_Rights\_Reporting\_POP"
- 5.4. Use language that is encouraging, respectful, use positive words and a pleasant tone of voice
- 5.5. Children should be adequately supervised at all times. Ensure as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child.
- 5.6. Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)

- 5.7. Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- 5.8. Ensure all technology and media based behavior and activities (including internet, websites accessed and mobile phone usage), is appropriate and will not have a negative effect on the child's physical, psychological or emotional well-being

### **Staff and volunteers must not**

- 5.9. Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- 5.10. Exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps. Sitting on laps could be appropriate sometime, for example while reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area)
- 5.11. Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- 5.12. Use inappropriate language in the presence of children. For example, insults, criticism, name-calling, bullying, swearing, yelling, racist and/or sexually suggestive comments or jokes are considered inappropriate.
- 5.13. Discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- 5.14. Have contact with a child (client) or their family outside of our organisation without either the Service Manager's or Assistant Manager's knowledge.
- 5.15. Engage in inappropriate physical contact, for example, violent or aggressive behaviour such as hitting, kicking, slapping, pushing, kissing or touching of a sexual nature.

## **6. Requirement 3 – Recruitment, Selection, Training and Management**

- 6.1. Bethany is committed to ensure it recruits the right people into the organisation who share the same commitment and dedication to providing a safe and supportive environment for children and young people.
- 6.2. As such, several Human Management Resource documents (position description, key selection criteria, induction checklist, and the service user information pack) acknowledge Bethany's Child & Youth Risk Management strategy.
- 6.3. In addition to this, Children & Youth Policy training is to take place annually. This activity has been logged in the Quality Assurance online calendar.
- 6.4. **Interviews** - Bethany is committed to ensuring the behaviour of all paid employees and volunteers towards children and young people is appropriate. The Key Selection Criteria has a question based on interacting with children and young persons.
- 6.5. **Reference Checks** - Bethany has a question on the reference check guide asking "Do you have any concerns about the person working directly with children?"

## **7. Requirement 4 – Handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines**

- 7.1 Bethany is committed to prevention of all forms of harm, abuse and neglect. We take all allegation cases extremely seriously and will not hesitate to take appropriate action where necessary, in order to protect children, young people and their families. Breaches must be reported directly to the organisation as detailed in the "Human Rights / Abuse & Neglect Reporting" (Policy & Procedure 29)
- 7.2 Guidance on how to identify the different types of abuse which can occur and the harm which can arise can be found the Bethany document "Human\_Rights\_Info\_POP" (Policy & Procedure 28)
- 7.3 Our service delivery and information aims to support these rights in such a way that is appropriate, taking into account the disability and the person's cultural background.
- 7.4 Bethany will actively strive to eliminate abuse and neglect activity from its activities.
- 7.5 Service users, their representatives, and staff members (permanent, part-time, volunteer, contract or casual) have the right to make allegations of abuse and/or neglect. If a breach is observed, the Management team should be notified immediately.

- 7.6 Where instances of abuse are identified, Bethany will not hesitate to refer to appropriate key stakeholders (e.g. Queensland Police Service, Department of Child Safety, and Adult Guardian).
- 7.7 If a person making a report or allegation is unsatisfied with Bethany's response, or does not feel they are able to approach us, they may refer the matter to:
- the Queensland Police;
  - the Office of the Adult Guardian;
  - the Commissioner for Children and Young People;
  - a community visitor;
  - the Public Advocate;
  - the Ombudsman;
  - the Public Trustee;
  - the National Disability Service Abuse and Neglect Hotline;
  - Disability Services Queensland; or, where appropriate,
  - the Queensland Crime and Misconduct Commission

## 8. Requirement 5 – Managing breaches of the risk management strategy

- 8.1 Bethany will manage breaches of its risk management strategy in a fair and supportive manner.
- 8.2 A breach is any action or inaction by any member of Bethany, including children and young people, that fails to comply with any part of the strategy.
- 8.3 Who must comply with this plan

Types of breach	Consequences & Outcomes	Staff Responsibility
Inappropriate physical contact with children	Disciplinary procedures	Management
The use of inappropriate language with children, for example, insults, criticism, name-calling, bullying, swearing, yelling, racist and/or sexually suggestive comments or jokes	Disciplinary procedures	Management
Discrimination against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability	Disciplinary procedures	Management
Lie or mislead during the recruitment and selection processes	Disciplinary procedures	Management
Failure to undergo training or retraining in child and youth safety issues.	Disciplinary procedures	Management
The inappropriate use of mobile phones and devices and/or accessing of material that may negatively affect a child's physical, psychological or emotional well-being	Disciplinary procedures	Management
Not taking reasonable steps to protect children from abuse	Review the current code of conduct and policies and procedures, in extreme situations disciplinary procedures	Management
Develop friendships with children outside service hours	Review the current code of conduct and policies and procedures,	Management
Showing favouritism or special treatment amongst children	Review the current code of conduct and policies and procedures,	Management
Not reporting allegations of abuse and neglect using the correct procedure	Review the current code of conduct and policies and procedures, retraining	Management
Not providing a safe service environment for children	Review the current code of conduct and policies and procedures, in extreme situations disciplinary procedures	Management
Not using encouraging, respectful, use positive words and a pleasant tone of voice when engaging with children	Review the current code of conduct and policies and procedures, retraining	Management

- 8.4 Breaches must be reported directly to the organisation as detailed in the “Human Rights / Abuse & Neglect Reporting” (Policy & Procedure 29)

## **9. Requirement 6 – Risk management plans for high risk activities and special events**

- 9.1 Bethany is committed to drafting specific risk management plans for what it considers high risk activities or special events e.g. such as Kids camps.
- 9.2 Due to their nature, such activities may require extra planning and consideration to ensure that appropriate control measures are implemented to manage the identified risks.
- 9.3 These events will be risk assessed in line with the Bethany Risk\_Management POP (Policy 42).

## **10. Requirement 7 – Compliance with the requirements of the blue card system**

- 10.1 Bethany is committed to maintaining a safe and supportive environment for children and young people by complying with blue card screening requirements.
- 10.2 Bethany has determined that only employees would come into contact with children and young people will be required to be compliant with the blue card system. This specifically means, support workers, the management team and office staff.
- 10.3 The Service Manager is the designated contact person responsible for managing blue cards and Disability Services yellow cards within Bethany. Each blue card or exemption card application form for a paid employee or volunteer has a space in the “Organisation details” section for a “contact person”.
- 10.4 The Service Manager is the Bethany Care contact person for Blue Card Services and the sole person to discuss an individual’s blue card status, unless additional authorisation is provided.

### **Managing blue card applications**

Bethany will manage blue card application in the following way. These activities will be carried out by the Service Manager.

- 10.5 Notify all applicants that by signing the application form they are consenting to the screening process.
- 10.6 Certify and sight documents to confirm an employee’s identity as prescribed under the Act.
- 10.7 Carefully check through the application form to ensure all sections have been appropriately completed. This will minimise unnecessary delays that can result if further information is required after receiving an incorrect or incomplete form.
- 10.8 Be aware that while paid employees can commence employment after an application form has been submitted, volunteers and trainee students must not commence regulated employment until they hold a valid blue card and positive notice.
- 10.9 Explicitly warn potential staff (paid employees, volunteers and students) that it is an offence for a ‘disqualified person’ to sign a blue card application form or a renewal form (it is an offence for an employer not to provide this warning).
- 10.10 If a person joins Bethany and already has a blue card, we will ensure the validity of the blue card is verified.
- 10.11 If the person holds a paid blue card, Bethany will lodge an Authorisation to confirm a valid card/application form with Blue Card Services. This will ensure we will receive important notifications in relation to the blue card holder, including that the card has been cancelled or suspended.
- 10.12 If the person holds a volunteer blue card and will be undertaking paid employment with Bethany, we will lodge a Volunteer to paid transfer form with Blue Card Services. This will transfer their card from volunteer to paid

status and will ensure that we receive important notifications in relation to the blue card holder, including that the card has been cancelled or suspended.

- 10.13 If the person holds a volunteer blue card and will be undertaking voluntary employment at Bethany, we will lodge an Authorisation to confirm a valid card/application form with Blue Card Services. This will ensure that we will receive important notifications in relation to the blue card holder, including that the card has been cancelled or suspended.

## **11. Requirement 8 – Communication and Support**

- 11.1 Bethany has the following strategies for communicating its risk management strategy;
- 11.2 Written information for parents, employees and volunteers can be found in the Service User Information pack under the sections “Health Safety & Personal Wellbeing” and “Children & Youth”.
- 11.3 As part of the Bethany Induction process the Bethany Risk Management Policy is covered for all staff.

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