

Young People Safety & Wellbeing Policy & Procedure

a path to follow



Statement of Commitment

“To support young people in a way that respects their life experiences, protects their safety and nurtures their wellbeing”

Policy

Purpose of Policy & Procedure

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of A Path To Follow (APTF) employees and volunteers to young people (all people under the age of 18 years) safety; where preventing and responding to abuse is integral into our lived experience practice. The procedure is a guide for all employees, volunteers & students, where risks to young people’s wellbeing and/or safety becomes apparent.

Commitment to Young People’s Safety

All young people have a right to feel and be safe. The wellbeing of young people will always be our first priority with zero tolerance of abuse. APTF aims to create a safe and friendly environment where young people can feel safe, have fun and participate in supportive peer activities that are always carried out in the best interests of the young people.

Application of this Policy

This policy was developed by the Founder, Kirstie Edwards.

This policy and procedure applies to all individuals involved in our organisation including, but not limited to:

- Young Peers (People under 18 years supported by APTF)
- Peer Mentors/Workers
- Parents
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Students

All of the people over 18 years have a role and responsibility in relation to keeping young people safe. They must all:

- understand the indicators and risks of child abuse,
- appropriately act on any concerns raised by young people; and
- understand and follow all applicable laws in relation to the protection of young people and reporting or management of child safety concerns.

Child Abuse

Child abuse can take a broad range of forms including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse and neglect of any young person up to the age of 18. People to whom this policy applies need to be aware **that child abuse can occur whenever there is actual or potential harm to a young person**, and these are circumstances that APTF is committed to reducing the risk of occurrence for.



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Young People's Rights to Safety and Participation

APTF encourages young people to express their views about their safety and wellbeing. We actively encourage all young people to 'have a say' about things that are important to them. We teach them what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns young people raise with us. All Young People are encouraged to contact the Founder of APTF or have a trusted adult to talk to about any concerns.

Valuing Diversity

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this, we accept, welcome and celebrate diversity, on all levels. We:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families.
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families.
- welcome children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation.
- Celebrate the participation of those who identify as gender diverse and their supporters
- seek appropriate staff from diverse cultural backgrounds, identities and abilities.

Recruiting staff and volunteers

APTF takes the following steps to ensure sound practice in the recruitment and screening of employees and volunteers:

- Interview and conduct referee checks on all staff, volunteers & students and have questions specifically in reference to working with young people.
- Require Working with Children Checks & Police Check clearances
- Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements and as part of the induction process for new staff or volunteers

Supporting staff and volunteers

APTF seeks to attract and retain the best and most appropriate employees and volunteers. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We have developed a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training on the requirements of the Code.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

Kirstie can be contacted by email kirstie@apathtofollow or phone 0478 310 145. Our Incident Reporting Procedure and Report Form can be accessed by contacting Kirstie.

Risk Management

Despite the fact we are focused on instilling hope through being recovery focused APTF also recognises the essentialness of a risk management to minimising the potential for abuse to occur and use this to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning.



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Procedure

This procedure outlines a protocol adopted by APTF, in the best interests young person wellbeing and safety. It describes the processes people can take where they feel there is risk to a young person's wellbeing and/or safety, prior to it becoming an incident serious enough to warrant following our Incident Reporting Procedure. It allows for consultation and advice around matters that are emerging, that are unclear in nature, conflicting at an early stage, in the hope to intervene prior to a matter becoming more serious.

APTF employees, volunteers and students are required to consult on matters of risk, as early as possible, to enact early intervention and guidance strategies. No employee, volunteer or student is expected to deal with probable risks to young people alone and are instructed to register their issue, as soon as they feel the problem is outside their scope of role, to their direct Manager.

Steps

1. Issue/risk/conflict/concern is identified by a peer, a peer's family or supporter, employee, volunteer or student;
 - a) The issue/risk/conflict/concern is deemed serious enough to directly follow APTF's incident reporting procedure, so an incident report is filled out and submitted to the Principal of APTF. **The formal Risk Management Policy and Procedure is then followed.**
 - **OR**
 - b) Degree of issue/risk/conflict/concern is unclear and/or at early stages and advice and guidance is required, so management are consulted for guidance and advice. **The risk and corrective outcomes are actioned, recorded and monitored according to the Risk Management Procedure.**

Written By: Kirstie Edwards - Principal
Approved By: Kirstie Edwards - Principal
Last Reviewed: 28/1/2021, 25/5/22
Date for Review: 28/1/2022, 25/5/23



Kirstie Edwards, Founder, A Path To Follow
0478 310 145 | kirstie@apathtofollow.com.au
apathtofollow.com.au