



Adelaide Paediatrics

**Adelaide Paediatrics
Child Safe Policy**

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Child Safe Policy

1. Purpose

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the management and all staff of Adelaide Paediatrics to child safety and establishing and maintaining a child safe and child friendly environment across all sites and in all activities.

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 who work with children issued by the Chief Executive of the Department for Families and Communities.

It is also part of Adelaide Paediatrics' endeavour to become a Family Friendly Workplace, and important for the Children of Employees to have a child safe and child friendly environment when they are either in one of our premises or programs as necessitated by our family flexible workplace arrangements.

3. Scope

This policy, from the date of endorsement, applies to all employees and directors and other individuals involved in the organisation, including:

- Employees (permanent and casual)
- Directors
- Managers including Directors and the Practice Manager
- Volunteers
- Work experience students

It also implicitly includes other individuals involved in the practice who may come into contact with children and young people in the practice and/or information pertaining to children and young people including:

- Subcontractors (both health professionals and otherwise)
- Other professionals who sublet space within Adelaide Paediatrics premises or programs
- Indirect service providers

An example of an indirect service provider may be a computer technician who, as a result of their work for Adelaide Paediatrics, has access to private client files, and as such would fall within the above definition.

4. Commitment to Child Safety

All children who attend Adelaide Paediatrics 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.

Everyone within our practice has a role to play in ensuring a safe environment for children and young people, including all those mentioned in section 3. Scope.

5. Children's Participation

Adelaide Paediatrics encourages and respects the views of children and young people who access our services. We listen to and act upon any concerns that children, young people or their families raise with us.

We provide clear age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate explanations to children and young people and allow for questions during consultation and treatment. We involve children and young people in decision-making as appropriate.

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.

6. Recruitment Practices

Adelaide Paediatrics takes all reasonable steps to ensure that we engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. We employ a range of screening measures and apply best practice standards in the screening and recruitment of employees and volunteers. We interview and conduct referee checks on all employees.

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.

Any person who falls within the scope of this document who does not fulfil these requirements will be precluded from contact with children and their records in the fulfilment of their work obligations to Adelaide Paediatrics.

In October 2017 Adelaide Paediatrics added to the requirements for employment a DCSI Working with Children Clearance for all new employees and the requirement that all current employees acquire this at the time of expiration of National Police Checks.

- All new employees undergo induction and receive a copy of our Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct.
- All employees receive regular supervision sessions that include a focus on ongoing learning about child protection and other matters that affect children and young people.
- From time to time, employees working regularly with children and young people are provided opportunities to attend training sessions about their mandatory notification obligations.
- All professional staff need to comply with mandatory professional development as outlined by their relevant Registration Boards, Professional Associations and Commonwealth and State Laws.

7. Code of Conduct

All members are made aware of, and must abide by, our Code of Conduct. Our Code of Conduct was developed in collaboration with our employees, volunteers, the children who use our services and their parents.

Adelaide Paediatrics Code of Conduct is outlined in Appendix B.

8. Support for Employees and Volunteers

Adelaide Paediatrics seeks to attract and retain the best licensees, employees and volunteers.

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

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We ensure that volunteers and employees 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.

9. Reporting and Responding to Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

Information about making appropriate reports of abuse or neglect is available from the South Australian Department of Child Protection website:

<https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse>

Adelaide Paediatrics will not tolerate incidents of child abuse.

All employees 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. Alternatively, utilise the online reporting system available on the South Australian Department of Child Protection website:

<https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse/report-child-abuse-or-neglect>

We ensure that employees are aware of how to make appropriate reports of abuse or neglect. We provide opportunities for employees to attend an information session on mandatory reporting. We also ensure that employees have access to relevant information resources available from the Department of Child Protection, including:

- Guidelines for Mandated Notifiers (available to view or download from <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse/mandated-notifiers-and-their-role>)
- Department for Families and Communities' reporting child abuse website: <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse/report-child-abuse-or-neglect>).

We ensure that support is also available for the employee making the report, particularly where an ongoing service is provided to the child, young person and their family. This support may be accessed through either the Directors or the Practice Manager.

Employees are also encouraged to report to the Directors or Practice Manager, any reasonable suspicion that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected by another employee. Adelaide Paediatrics may resolve to take protective action to keep the child and others safe. (**Note:** It is paramount that where a complaint is made or suspicion is raised, that all involved ensure that the principles of confidentiality and natural justice applies).

The Directors and Practice Manager are to keep any information received in a separately locked file store with details of when, where and from whom they received this information, what they did with it, that can only be accessed by them, and all principals of safety, confidentiality and natural justice must be attributed to all people involved.

Supporting Children, Young People and Their Families

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. This support may include:

- Referring the child, young person or their family to other appropriate services;
- Displaying information in our waiting area about other relevant support services; and
- Ensuring that the child or young person's medical needs continue to be met following the making of a report.

10. Strategies to Minimise Risk

Adelaide Paediatrics takes steps to minimise the risks to children due to the actions or omissions of employees, contractors or other people within our practice. We undertake regular reviews to address any new or emerging risks in order to maintain a safe environment for children.

Strategies implemented to minimise and control risks to children and young people include:

- All employees are required to abide by our Child Safe Policy.
- Adelaide Paediatrics will undertake to ensure that employees in management positions will hold current, accredited Child Safe Environments certificates, as well as identifying opportunities for other employees to obtain the same.
- Adelaide Paediatrics requires that all practitioners engaged via Service Agreements/sub-contractors provide evidence of current DCSI Working with Children Screening at commencement of engagement and renew every three years as applicable.
- Employees of Adelaide Paediatrics will take reasonable steps to ensure they 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).
- Adelaide Paediatrics will take reasonable steps to ensure that all clients and caregivers are made aware that young children entering our practice must be supervised at all times. Where a child or young person is unaccompanied by a parent or caregiver, the practitioner will consider whether a chaperone is required.
- Employees of Adelaide Paediatrics will take reasonable steps to provide clear age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate explanations to children and young people about the consultation and allow for questions prior to examination.
- Where treatment requires physical contact, employees will first seek the consent of the child, young person and their parents (where applicable).
- Employees confirm the identity of any child receiving treatment at this Practice.
- Adelaide Paediatrics will take reasonable steps to ensure that we respond to any concerns that children, or their families or carers raise quickly and fairly.
- Employees 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 or young person has been or is being abused or neglected.
- We ensure a physically and socially safe environment for children and young people that is free of any identifiable hazards.
- Adelaide Paediatrics Code of conduct (see Appendix B)
- Template statement to be signed by employees, volunteers and parents indicating they have read and will abide by this policy (see Appendix C)
- Evaluation of these strategies and the development of additional strategies to minimise and control risks to children and young people occurs as part of our ongoing risk management process.

11. Harassment/ Bullying

Adelaide Paediatrics 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 a Director or the Practice Manager.

12. Communication

Adelaide Paediatrics 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, 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

The policies and procedures that support our Child-Safe Policy include, but are not limited to:

- Any relevant policies or procedures that our organisation has developed to protect children, including:
- Adelaide Paediatrics Employee Handbook which includes Code of Conduct;
- Adelaide Paediatrics Privacy Policy;
- Adelaide Paediatrics Employment Contract, which outlines requirement to have a satisfactory DCSI Working with Children Screening as a condition of entering into employment and being engaged in continuing employment.

14. APPENDIX A - CONDUCTING CRIMINAL HISTORY ASSESSMENTS

Conducting Criminal History Assessments

Adelaide Paediatrics will conduct criminal history assessments in one of the options outlined below, noting that we may exercise discretion as to which service provider we may use, accept from or offer to employees and those undergoing the recruitment process. This may include using a service such as National Crime Check www.nationalcrimecheck.com.au to obtain a National Police Certificate.

Assessments Required for Prescribed Positions

All employees 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 employee members to prescribed positions.

This includes all employees who regularly work with or around children in an unsupervised capacity, or have access to children's health records.

Procedure for Conducting Criminal History Assessments

Note: The Children's Protection Act 1993 enables organisations to decide the manner in which they will conduct criminal history assessments.

Option 1

A current letter of clearance from the Department for Families and Communities' Screening Unit is a precondition of employment at this Practice. The cost of obtaining a letter of clearance will be at the expense of the employee.

Prior to the appointment of a new employee and then at three yearly intervals, this Practice will direct the applicant/employee to obtain a letter of clearance from the screening unit as evidence that the applicant does not pose an increased risk of harm to children. Letters of clearance are obtained for all current employees who are working with children once every three years.

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

The informed written consent of the employee is required prior to conducting a criminal history assessment.

Information relating to an individual's criminal history and the assessment process is managed securely and confidentially and in accordance with the Standards for dealing with information obtained about the criminal history of employees and volunteers who work with children issued by the Chief Executive, Department for Families and Communities.

Option 2

A satisfactory criminal history assessment is a precondition of working in a prescribed position at this practice whilst a Department for Families and Communities' Screening Unit assessment is undertaken.

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

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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 <https://www.police.sa.gov.au/services-and-events/apply-for-a-police-record-check>

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 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 at any time that the Practice believes it necessary or desirable for the purpose of maintaining a child safe environment.

15. APPENDIX B – CODE OF CONDUCT

Code of Conduct for the Management, and Employees of Adelaide Paediatrics Including Child Protection Guidelines

Caring for children and young people brings additional responsibilities for management, practitioners and employees of this Practice.

In addition to the obligations placed on practitioners under the varying codes of conduct of their own registration boards and professional associations, all employees of this practice are responsible for promoting the safety and well-being of children and young people.

All management and employees of Adelaide Paediatrics will adhere to the code of conduct for registered health practitioners of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), relevant to their own profession. Those practitioners without a registration board must agree to the code-of-conduct of a relevant professional body. This agreement will be recorded by the Practice manager.

Each non-health professional staff member will take on the code-of-conduct of their direct supervisor. Sections of the code not relevant to a particular non-Health Professional staff member, may be identified by that staff member to their manager, and may through mutual agreement, be excluded from this Code of Conduct for that individual staff member. Exclusions must be signed by both the staff member and their manager and kept with the Employee's Employment records in a safe and secure place.

Child Protection Guidelines

- Ensuring the safety and welfare of the child or young person is paramount at all times.
- Treating all children and young people with dignity, equality and respect.
- Adhering to this Practice's Child Safe Policy at all times.
- Listening and responding appropriately to the views and concerns of children and young people within the Practice.
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people within the Practice.
- Where appropriate, ensuring that a chaperone or other suitable adult is present when consulting with a child or young person.
- Ensuring children and young people understand their rights and explaining to the child in age-appropriate language what they can expect during the consultation.
- Responding quickly, fairly and transparently to any serious complaints made by a child, young person or their parent/guardian.
- Notifying the **Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78** as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable suspicion that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected.

Employees 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.