

Child Safe Standard Two

Child Safe Policy and Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Talking Turtles Speech Pathology Pty Ltd is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all participating and visiting children and young people. Talking Turtles Speech Pathology Pty Ltd shares the Victorian Government's commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Betrayal of Trust report, and supports the new regulatory landscape surrounding child safety, underpinned by new Child Safe Standards. Talking Turtles Speech Pathology Pty Ltd recognises the Child Safe Standards are compulsory minimum standards for all category two organisations (such as speech pathology clinics), to ensure they are well prepared to protect children from abuse and neglect.

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of our management, staff and volunteers to child safety and to provide an outline of the policies and practices we have developed to keep children safe from any harm, including abuse.

Key points:

- Our organisation is committed to child safety.
- We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.
- We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.
- We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.
- We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.
- Our organisation is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.
- Our organisation has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- Our organisation is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

Commitment to child safety

All children who visit Talking Turtles Speech Pathology Pty Ltd have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance of child abuse. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun.

This policy was developed in collaboration with our staff, volunteers, the children who use our services and their parents. It applies to all staff, volunteers, children and individuals involved in our organisation.

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Children's rights to safety and participation

Talking Turtles Speech Pathology Pty Ltd staff and volunteers encourage children to express their views. We listen to their suggestions, especially on 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 share information on our notice boards and in our therapy rooms about what children can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children, or their parents, raise with us.

Valuing diversity

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this 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
- seek appropriate staff from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Recruiting staff and volunteers

Talking Turtles Speech Pathology Pty Ltd applies the best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers. We interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers and require police checks and Working with Children Checks for relevant positions. Information about our commitment to Child Safety is included in all advertisements.

Supporting staff and volunteers

Talking Turtles Speech Pathology Pty Ltd seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers. We provide support and regular 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

<Insert name> has been appointed as our clinic's Child Safety Officer (CSO), with the specific responsibility of responding to any complaints or disclosures made by staff, volunteers, parents or children. Complaints and child safety concerns can be communicated either in person or via our communication/suggestions box.

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 policies, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to children.

Reviewing this policy

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