

EAHC Newton Child Safe Policy

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the management and all staff of EAHC Newton to child safety and establishing and maintaining a child safe and child friendly environment across both sites and in all activities. The Policy was developed with the involvement of employees, management, and our patients including children and young people where possible.

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 harm and/or risk of harm. EAHC Newton's Child Safe Policy complies with the legislative requirements of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017, the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) ACT 2016, and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

EAHC Newton has adopted and applies National Principles for Child Safe Organisations to promote child safety and wellbeing. The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations are as follows:

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
6. Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations describes a child safe organisation as one that creates a culture, adopts strategies and takes action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people. A child safe organisation consciously and systematically:

- Creates an environment where children's safety and wellbeing is the centre of thought, values and actions
- Places emphasis on genuine engagement with, and valuing of children
- Creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people
- Creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm
- Responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions.

This policy applies to all individuals involved in our organisation, including:

- Employees (permanent and casual)
- Executives
- Those undertaking Work Experience or Student Learning

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 within EAHC Newton premises
- Indirect service providers

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

All children regardless of the setting have a right to feel and be safe. EAHC Newton is a child safe and friendly setting where all patients including children and young people are protected, supported and valued. We take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach on child/young people's wellbeing and protection from harm. Everyone within our practice has a role to play in ensuring a safe environment for children and young people.

Communication of the EAHC Newton Child Safe Policy:

- The EAHC Newton Child Safe Policy forms part of the EAHC Newton Practice Manual documents and is available on all computer workstations at EAHC Newton. Hard copies are also available at our practices for staff access.
- As part of their induction process, new employees and medical providers are provided with a copy of the EAHC Newton Child Safe Policy and the EAHC Newton Child Safe Code of Conduct Form.
- Amendments and updates to either of these documents are distributed amongst employees when they occur, and are discussed at practice meetings.

Children Participation:

EAHC Newton encourages and respects the views of children and young people who access our services. We encourage the participation and involvement of children and young people (where this is appropriate to do so). We listen to and act upon any concerns that children, young people or their families/caregivers raise with us. We provide clear age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate explanations to children and young people and allow for questions during their consultations and treatments. We involve children and young people in decision-making as appropriate. We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.

Recruitment and Being Child Safe:

EAHC Newton employs a range of strategies during the recruitment process and orientation of new employees to ensure only the most suitable and appropriate persons work in our practice with children and young people. This process includes:

- Interviewing all potential employees and conducting reference checks.
- A Working with Children Check issued by the Department of Human Services Screening Unit is mandatory for all employees who will work with children prior to commencement of their induction period.
- A copy of the Working with Children Check must be provided to the Practice Manager at the commencement of induction. If at any time our organisation becomes aware of information that may

change an employee's working with children status, the Screening Unit will be advised immediately and until fully investigated by all relevant parties, the employee is excluded from working rostered shifts.

- All new employees undergo an induction and receive a copy of our Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct. The employee is required to sign a copy as an agreement they will abide, and this record is kept by our Practice Manager in the employee record.
- Performance Appraisals for existing staff are conducted annually and immediately if performance/conduct concerns are identified.

Ongoing Education, Support and Supervision:

EAHC Newton has in place strategies to educate and support all employees regarding risk and other matters pertinent to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Where required, staff and volunteers are supervised by the Practice Manager or Practice Principals to ensure they adhere to our Child Safe Policies and Procedures. In addition, these strategies support all employees to understand their mandatory/moral reporting obligations, and their role in contributing to EAHC Newton as a Child Safe Environment. This includes:

- Links to web based resources employees can access at any time via any desktop at our practices. These resources can be used to build knowledge and skills regarding the wellbeing and developmental needs and topical social concerns related to the protection of children and young people.
- Access to digital and hard copies of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations at both practices.
- Access to digital and hard copies of the DHS mandatory notification information booklet "Safe Environments for Children and Young People"
- Staff are encouraged to attend and are provided opportunities to attend Child Safe Environments training.
- A Child Safe Environments Folder kept at each site that contains information resources including but not limited to indicators of risk, DHS Decision Making Trees, DHS reporting checklists and templates, links and contact details of support services for referrals.

Mandatory Reporting:

EAHC Newton will not tolerate incidents of child abuse. All employees understand their obligation to notify the Child Abuse Report Line on Ph: 13 14 78, 24hrs 7 days per week, as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable suspicion that a child is at risk of harm or has been harmed. Alternatively, for less serious concerns utilise the online reporting system available on the South Australian Department of Child Protection website: <https://my.families.sa.gov.au/IDMProv/landing.html>.

All serious concerns must be reported via the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78) and must not be submitted via eCARL.

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 Practice Principals or the Practice Manager.

Employees or anyone associated with our organisation are also encouraged to report to the Practice Principals or Practice Manager, any reasonable suspicion that a child is at risk of harm or actual harm by an employee. However, no discussion needs to take place with anyone prior to a report being made. The Practice Manager will listen to the feedback or complaint and make a record of it. All complaints/feedback are treated as serious. The

Practice Manager will consider if any interim action is required to ensure the safety of children of young people. If appropriate, this may include consulting with the Child Abuse Report Line or SA Police. Clear documentation of the complaint/feedback, decisions and actions taken will be kept securely. All principles of safety, confidentiality, natural justice and procedural fairness must be attributed to all people involved.

We recognise that often 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 and/or monitoring their situation following the making of a report.

Risk Management:

EAHC Newton takes steps to minimise the risks to children due to the actions or omissions of employees, contractors or other people within our practices. 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 but are not limited to:

- All employees are required to abide by the EAHC Child Safe Policy and acknowledge and sign the EAHC Child Safe Code of Conduct Form.
- EAHC Newton requires that all staff and practitioners provide evidence of current DCSI Working with Children Checks at commencement of engagement and renewal every 5 years.
- Employees of EAHC Newton 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).
- EAHC Newton takes 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 EAHC Newton takes 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 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.
- EAHC Newton documents information about any child protection orders, instruments of guardianship or custody, domestic violence or restraining orders against a parent or guardian in the health record of the child.
- All Children and Young People have an emergency contact and persons consented to receive information about their medical care documented in their clinic record.
- EAHC Newton takes 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 at risk of harm or has/will

experience harm. Employees understand reporting via eCARL should only be attended for less serious concerns.

- We ensure a physically and socially safe environment for children and young people that is free of any identifiable hazards.
- 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.

Children and Parental Responsibility:

Each parent has parental responsibility for each of their children until each child reaches 18 years of age. Parental responsibility is not affected by changes in the parents' relationship such as separation or divorce or remarriage.

Courts may make orders about parental responsibilities only if the parents cannot agree about the arrangements for their child or children, these are called parenting orders. Courts may also approve and make consent orders to reflect an agreement reached between parents.

A parenting order may deal with one or more of the following:

- Who the children will live with
- How much time the children will spend with each parent and with other people, such as grandparents
- The allocation of parental responsibility
- How the children will communicate with a parent they do not live with, or other people, and
- Any aspect of the care, welfare or development of the children.

A parenting order for a child 16 years and over does not take precedence over the young person's right to confidentiality and privacy.

On registration of a patient under the age of 18, enquiries should be made as to whether there is a parenting order in place, or any other court orders such as a personal violence order. If the advice received is that there is an order in place, a copy of the order should be obtained and placed on the patient's file. The status of orders made should be regularly reviewed and patient files updated to reflect the changes that may be made.

Review of the EAHC Newton Child Safe Policy and Procedures:

As a medical practice, we are required to review our Practice Manual at least every 3 years for our Accreditation. Our Child Safe Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct Form and supporting documents are reviewed at least every 3 years. These documents can be reviewed and updated at any time it is deemed appropriate to continue to maintain our practices as a Child Safe Environment.

Supporting Policies and Procedures:

The policies and procedures that support our Child Safe Policy include, but are not limited to any relevant policies that our organisation has developed to protect all our patients including:

- EAHC Newton Employee Handbook which includes the EAHC Newton Code of Conduct Form and the EAHC Newton Child Safe Policy.
- EAHC Newton Privacy Policy.
- EAHC Newton Risk Management Policy.
- EAHC Newton Employment Contract which outlines requirement to have a satisfactory Working with Children Check from the DCSI Screening Unit as a condition of entering into employment and engaging in continued employment.

Acknowledgement:

EAHC Newton ensures everyone to whom this policy applies is aware of and reads this policy, can access digital and hardcopies at both of our practices at all times. In addition, we also ask all employees to sign the EAHC Newton Child Safe Code of Conduct Form stating that they have read our policies and all updates as they are made. Our Practice Manager retains signed statements.