

THE CHILD SAFE/CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR Home Based Learning Network of WA trading as Home Education WA

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the Committee, employees and volunteers to child safety and establishing and maintaining child safe and child friendly environments.

Commitment to safety of young people

All young people who access the services of HBLN have a right to feel and be safe.

HBLN is committed to the safety and wellbeing 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 young people feel safe and enjoy learning.

Where personal contact is required as part of the instruction provided, the appropriate procedures will be explained to the young person prior to the instruction being undertaken.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, young people, visitors and individuals who access the services of HBLN.

Young people's rights to safety and participation

The HBLN Committee, employees and volunteers encourage young people to express their views, and make suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect young people. We actively encourage all young people who access our services to 'have a say' about those things that are important to them. We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.

We advise young people about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns young people, or their parents, raise with us.

Recruitment of employees and volunteers

HBLN applies the best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of employees and volunteers. Our statement of commitment to child safety and our requirements are included in all advertisements.

We conduct criminal history assessments for people working with children, as required by *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004* and subsequent amendments.

Support for employees and volunteers

HBLN seeks to attract and retain the best employees and volunteers. We provide support and supervision, so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We have a code of conduct to provide guidance to our employees and volunteers, all of whom acknowledge the requirements of the code.

Reporting and responding to suspected abuse and neglect

HBLN will not tolerate incidents of child abuse.

HBLN are responsible for ensuring that employees and volunteers are aware how to make appropriate reports of abuse.

Employees and volunteers must notify the Department of Child Protection 1800 273 889 as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable suspicion that a young person has been or is being abused or neglected.

A person does not necessarily exhaust their duty of care to a child by making a report to the Department of Child Protection – they may still have a role in supporting the child or young person. For example, employees and volunteers may also report any form of abuse to the HBLN Coordinator for further support or to ensure that HBLN takes all reasonable steps to keep the child and others safe.

HBLN will support any employee and volunteer that makes a report to the Department of Child Protection.

The Child Protection Contact Person is the HBLN Coordinator.

Related Policies and Procedures

The following policies and procedures also support HBLN's child safe policy:

- Code of Conduct
- Template statement signed by employees and volunteers indicating that they have read and will abide by HBLN's child safe policy
- Staff and volunteer recruitment processes, including those relating to conducting criminal history assessments
- Risk Management Strategy

Definitions of the following terms are included in the attached appendix: *Child, Child Abuse, Child Protection Contact Person, Trainer, Young Person.*

THE CHILD SAFE/CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

DEFINITIONS

Child (Young person) – A child means a person under 18 years of age

Child Abuse – Children can be abused in different ways and child abuse includes a wide range of acts of omission and commission.

Physical Abuse – is commonly characterized by physical injury resulting from practices such as hitting, punching, kicking (marks from belt buckles, fingers); shaking (particularly young babies); burning (irons, cigarettes), biting, pulling out hair; alcohol or other drug administration.

Sexual Abuse – occurs when someone in a position of power to the child uses his/her power to involve the child in sexual activity. Behaviour can include sexual suggestion; exhibitionism, mutual masturbation, oral sex; showing pornographic material e.g. DVDs, internet; using children in the production of pornographic material; penile or other penetration of the genital or anal region; child prostitution.

Emotional Abuse – tends to be a chronic behavioural pattern directed at a child whereby a child's self esteem and social competence are undermined or eroded over time. Behaviours may include devaluing, ignoring, rejecting, corrupting, isolating, terrorising, chronic or extreme domestic violence in the children's presence.

Neglect – is characterized by the failure to provide for the child's basic needs. Behaviours may include inadequate supervision of young children for long periods of time; failure to provide adequate nutrition, clothing or personal hygiene; failure to provide needed or appropriate health care/medical treatment; disregard for potential hazards in the home; forcing the child to leave home early; allowing children to engage in chronic truancy.

Child Protection Contact Person – a person appointed by the HBLN Committee to be responsible for child protection matters and to ensure that the HBLN child protection procedures conform to the requirements of the relevant jurisdiction.

Criminal history assessment: a decision about whether a person is suitable to work with children based on the person's criminal history (if any) and the assessed risk of harm to children who receive the service.

Trainer – any person over the age of 18 who is employed by HBLN and is responsible for the care and safety of children in a recognized training course delivered under the HBLN name.

Young person – term used instead of the word child to describe a person under the age of 18.