



Child Safe Standards

VERSION 3.0

13TH AUGUST 2024

Table of Contents

Child Safe Standards	2
Mission	2
Vision	2
Values	2
Practice Summary	2
Policy and Procedures in the Practice	3
Quality and Practice Improvement	3
Introduction	3
Child Safe Standard 1: Culture of Child Safety	4
Child Safe Standard 2: Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing	4
Child Safe Standard 3: Children’s Empowerment and Participation	4
Child Safe Standard 4: Involvement of Families and Communities	5
Child Safe Standard 5: Respecting Equity and Diversity	5
Child Safe Standard 6: Suitability and Support of Staff and Volunteers	5
Child Safe Standard 7: Child-Focused Complaint Systems	5
Child Safe Standard 8: Staff Knowledge, Skills, and Awareness	7
Child Safe Standard 9: Safe Physical and Online Environments	7
Child Safe Standard 10: Regular Review and Improvement	8
Child Safe Standard 11: Documentation of Policies and Procedures	8
Resources	8

Child Safe Standards

Mission

Empowering people to lead independent and meaningful lives, with sustainable, satisfying daily activities and relationships.

Vision

To provide quality therapy services, as a leader in innovation and sustained by strong relationships with our clients, communities, and within our team.

Values

Collaborative – Innovation – Sustainable – Empowered

Practice Summary

Allay Occupational Therapy's policies underscore our commitment to quality occupational therapy services. Our values of Collaboration, Innovation, Sustainability, and Empowerment guide us in empowering individuals to lead independent, fulfilling lives. We strive to be a catalyst for positive change, fostering autonomy, well-being, and community involvement.

We prioritise client service by providing evidence-based interventions tailored to the needs and objectives of individuals across all life stages. Our occupational therapists and allied health assistants work closely with clients and their support networks, using innovative strategies to maximise outcomes and foster sustainable well-being. We value strong relationships with our clients, communities, and team, aiming to be a leader in innovative therapy services.

Our clients remain central to our service delivery, practice management, and policy development. We are dedicated to creating a respectful, responsive, safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for all. The Allay community is inclusive of all cultures and identities. We maintain a safe and inclusive environment, welcoming individuals from all backgrounds, and appreciate their contributions to our practice.

We are committed to continuous quality and practice improvement, reflecting lived experiences, current research, knowledge, and strategies. Our Allay Policy and Procedure Guidelines, aligning with relevant legislation, support our team in implementing these practices.

We value our team's well-being and professional growth, and provide a supportive environment for personal and career development. Our policies and procedures, coupled with a professional development program, guide best practices, uphold standards, and ensure a safe and ethical environment, propelling us to the forefront of the occupational therapy field.

Legislation and practice principles considered were:

- Disability Act 2006
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013

Prepared by: Lauren Pattinson, Principal Occupational Therapist
Commencement date: 13th August 2024
Review date: 13th August 2026

Allay Occupational Therapy
Child Safe Standards
Page | 2

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguarding Framework 2017
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Rules 2018
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Worker Screening Rules, WWC, police checks, criminal offences
- Child Safe Standard

Policy and Procedures in the Practice

We value the well-being and resilience of our team members. We prioritise their professional growth and ensure a supportive environment that promotes personal and career development. By investing in their well-being and ongoing education, we empower our team to provide the highest quality of care.

Our policies and procedures are designed to guide best practice and provide clear direction to our team. They serve as a roadmap for delivering exceptional care, upholding professional standards, and ensuring a safe and ethical practice environment. They are supported by a professional development program through policy training, case studies and reflective activities.

Quality and Practice Improvement

To maintain the relevancy and effectiveness of our policies and procedures, a thorough review is conducted every two years. This review involves the active participation of the Principal Occupational Therapist, Associate Principal Occupational Therapists, Policy and Procedure Working Party, leadership team, and individual team members. By engaging in this collaborative effort, we can make necessary adjustments, incorporate new insights, and remain aligned with best practices and regulatory standards. Via policy training, case studies and reflective activities, Allay leadership and the team are aware of the application of this policy and procedure in practice.

Introduction

Allay Occupational Therapy acts to protect children from abuse, and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. Abuse may be child sexual abuse, physical abuse, serious emotional and psychological abuse and serious neglect.

Protection of children has its foundation in a culture of child safety, that is embedded throughout our organisation so that child safety is part of everyone's everyday thinking and practice. All of our occupational therapists aim to demonstrate child safe values, attitudes and behaviours.

Allay Occupational Therapy fosters a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. All of our staff, volunteers and students consider the safety of all children, recognise the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, cultural safety for children from a lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex background and the safety of children with a disability.

Child Safe Standard 1: Culture of Child Safety

Allay Occupational Therapy acts to protect children from abuse, and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. This is ensured in the first instance by a culture of child safety embedded throughout our organisation so that child safety is part of everyone's everyday thinking and practice. All of our occupational therapists aim to demonstrate child safe values, attitudes and behaviours.

Allay Occupational Therapy fosters a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. All of our staff, volunteers and students consider the safety of all children, recognise the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, cultural safety for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex background and the safety of children with a disability.

Our leadership team takes a lead in protecting children from abuse, and is involved in providing direction of all child abuse allegations and risks, and takes responsibility for ensuring an appropriate response.

All allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns are treated very seriously by Allay Occupational Therapy. A strategy to prevent, detect and respond to child abuse risks is implemented. Which includes complying with all legal requirements, including reporting suspicions of child abuse to police and/or child protection.

Allay Occupational Therapy is inclusive to all children and families. In particular:

- Cultural safety for Aboriginal children,
- Cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds,
- Cultural safety for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex background,
- The safety of children with a disability.

Child Safe Standard 2: Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

Allay's commitment to child safety and wellbeing is embedded in our leadership, governance, and culture. We have a zero-tolerance policy for child abuse and adhere strictly to our legal and moral obligations. Our leadership team champions a child-safe culture, ensuring that child safety is a key focus at all levels of the organisation. We maintain robust policies and procedures, regularly review our practices, and provide ongoing training to ensure that child safety is upheld.

Child Safe Standard 3: Children's Empowerment and Participation

Allay is a child-centred organisation that empowers children to participate in decision-making processes and express their views freely. We involve children in our organisational planning, the delivery of services, and management decisions that affect them. We regularly engage with children to understand their safety concerns and make them aware of their rights, particularly the right to feel safe within our organisation. We provide avenues such as suggestion boxes and child-led discussions to ensure their voices are heard and acted upon.

Child Safe Standard 4: Involvement of Families and Communities

Allay recognises the critical role that families and communities play in promoting child safety and wellbeing. We actively engage with families and community members, providing them with clear and accessible information about our policies, procedures, and operations. We encourage families to participate in decision-making processes and seek their input on our approach to child safety. We also ensure that our practices are culturally sensitive and inclusive, reflecting the diverse backgrounds of the children and families we serve.

Child Safe Standard 5: Respecting Equity and Diversity

Allay is committed to upholding equity and respecting the diverse needs of all children in our care. We create an environment where every child feels safe, welcome, and included, regardless of their background or circumstances. We provide culturally safe and accessible information and support to children and their families. Our policies and practices are designed to prevent discrimination and ensure that all children, including those experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage, are treated with fairness and respect.

Child Safe Standard 6: Suitability and Support of Staff and Volunteers

Allay ensures that all staff and volunteers are suitable and supported to uphold child safety and wellbeing values in their practice. We implement rigorous recruitment, screening, and induction processes to ensure that the people working with children are the right fit. Ongoing supervision, support, and performance management are provided to staff and volunteers to help them maintain high standards of child safety. We also offer regular training on child safety responsibilities, policies, external reporting obligations, and more. We achieve this by:

- Providing opportunities for employees and volunteers to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety. Supporting staff and volunteers to understand the importance of child safety and wellbeing, and enable them to consistently follow child safety policies and procedures.
- Allay Occupational Therapy reinforces a commitment to child safety by recognising the good work and practices of employees and volunteers in keeping children safe and protected.
- Allay Occupational Therapy takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. This includes police record and identity checks, Working with Children Checks where required, interviews and detailed reference checks from previous employers, including from the applicant's most recent line manager.
- Allay Occupational Therapy ensures that volunteers and employees who work with children have ongoing high quality supervision, support and training so that their performance is developed and enhanced to help protect children from abuse.
- Allay Occupational Therapy team members receive induction and ongoing training in child safety. Team members are required to review and sign the Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- Concepts surrounding child safety and practice are routinely discussed in forums such as in induction to Allay, team meetings, supervisions, clinical review and in-service professional development.

Child Safe Standard 7: Child-Focused Complaint Systems

Allay has established child-focused processes for handling complaints and concerns. Our complaints management system is designed to be accessible and responsive to the needs and rights of children.

We provide child-friendly information in our Kid's Rights Fact Sheet on how to raise concerns and ensure that all complaints are handled with the utmost priority for the safety and wellbeing of the child involved. Our approach includes clear roles and responsibilities for staff and volunteers, strict privacy and confidentiality measures, and adherence to external reporting obligations.

Allay Occupational Therapy is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children in our care. Our staff must follow clear steps for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse. We have established child-focused processes for handling complaints and concerns, ensuring that our system is accessible, responsive, and prioritizes the needs and rights of children.

If a Child Discloses an Incident of Abuse:

- **Listen Carefully:** Staff should listen attentively and let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred.
- **Reassure the Child:** Ensure the child knows that you take their disclosure seriously, that it is not their fault, and that they are doing the right thing by speaking up.
- **Explain Information Sharing:** Make it clear that the information may need to be shared with others, such as their parent/carer, specific people within Allay, or the police, to ensure their safety.
- **Avoid Making Promises:** Do not promise to keep the incident a secret but assure the child that you will do your best to keep them safe.
- **Provide Comfort:** Do not leave the child in a distressed state; if they seem at ease in your company, stay with them until they are calm.
- **Document the Incident:** Complete an incident report detailing the situation as soon as possible. Use the child's own words in your report.
- **Report the Disclosure:** Immediately report the disclosure to your Operational Supervisor and, if required, to the police or child protection authorities.
- **Secure Records:** Ensure that the disclosure is recorded accurately and that the record is stored securely.

If a Staff Member Identifies Concerns of Abuse or Safety Risks:

- **Ensure Immediate Safety:** Take any necessary steps to ensure the immediate safety of the client.
- **Consult with Leadership:** Speak to a member of the leadership team or the principal Occupational Therapist about your concerns.
- **Document the Concern:** Complete an incident report detailing the situation.
- **Follow Up:** If appropriate, ensure that any necessary reporting occurs, such as to child protection services or the Orange Door.

If a Parent/Carer Raises a Concern or Reports Abuse:

- **Acknowledge the Concern:** Explain that Allay Occupational Therapy takes all abuse allegations very seriously and that you will ensure the concern is properly addressed.
- **Discuss Child's Wellbeing:** Ask about the wellbeing of the child and allow the parent/carer to share the incident in their own words.
- **Document the Discussion:** Take notes during the discussion to capture all details accurately.
- **Explain Information Sharing:** Inform the parent/carer that the information may need to be shared with authorities, the Allay leadership team, or child protection services.
- **Avoid Making Promises:** Do not make promises at this early stage but reassure them that the child's safety is your priority.
- **Complete an Incident Report:** Document the situation in an incident report.

- Determine Next Steps: Ask the parent/carer what action they would like to take and advise them of the immediate next steps.
- Consult with Leadership: Speak to a member of the leadership team or the principal Occupational Therapist regarding their concerns.
- Secure Records: Ensure the report is recorded accurately and stored securely.

Child Safe Standard 8: Staff Knowledge, Skills, and Awareness

Allay promotes child safety and wellbeing by ensuring that all staff and volunteers are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and awareness. We provide ongoing education and training on children’s rights, recognising signs of abuse, responding to disclosures, understanding harmful behaviours, risk management, and more. We also focus on creating culturally safe and inclusive environments and addressing issues such as racism.

Child Safe Standard 9: Safe Physical and Online Environments

Allay takes proactive steps to ensure that our physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimizing the risk of harm to children. We develop and implement comprehensive risk management plans that are informed by input from staff, volunteers, parents, carers, and children. Our strategies aim to balance the need to protect children with their right to privacy, access to information, and social connections.

Allay adopts a risk management approach by considering the specific child safety risks associated with our activities, physical environments, and the characteristics of the children we serve. Once risks are identified, we take measures to reduce or remove them, ensuring the safety of all children in our care.

To effectively implement this standard, Allay:

- Risk Evaluation: Ensures a clear and accessible process for evaluating risks posed by situations and activities relevant to the organization, its size and resources, and the children we work with.
- Risk Mitigation: Develops, records, and communicates clear processes for removing risks to children, such as removing staff who may pose a risk.
- Staff Training: Provides staff and volunteers with training in identifying children at risk of abuse and understanding organizational child abuse risks.
- Continuous Improvement: Commits to continual improvement in risk management practices by learning from past experiences, including policy reviews and staff training.
- Leadership Endorsement: Drives a risk management approach through endorsement and ownership by leadership, with responsibility for risk identification and management integrated into position descriptions.
- Supervision Policies: Institutes risk management policies and processes, including supervision requirements for children by qualified and suitable staff.
- Risk Discussions: Includes discussions about apparent risks or ‘near misses’ in team meetings, encouraging early identification and raising awareness of possible risks.
- Qualified Staffing: Rosters staff with the necessary experience and qualifications to manage high-risk environments.

Concepts surrounding child safety and practice are routinely discussed in forums such as induction to Allay, team meetings, supervisions, clinical review, and in-service professional development. Through

these efforts, Allay ensures a safe environment that supports the wellbeing of all children in both physical and online spaces.

Child Safe Standard 10: Regular Review and Improvement

Allay is committed to the continuous improvement of our child safety and wellbeing policies and practices. We regularly review our policies and procedures to ensure they align with current best practices and address any systemic weaknesses. Feedback from children, families, staff, and community members is actively sought and used to inform our review processes. We also conduct regular analyses of complaints, concerns, and incidents to identify areas for improvement.

Child Safe Standard 11: Documentation of Policies and Procedures

Allay ensures that all child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures are thoroughly documented, accessible, and regularly updated. These documents include our Code of Conduct, risk assessment and management plans, complaint handling policy, recruitment policy, and more. We make sure that these documents are informed by stakeholder consultation and expert advice. We also monitor compliance with these policies and provide ongoing support to staff and volunteers to ensure they are implemented effectively.

Resources

- Child Safe Standard
- Family Inclusive Policy
- Incident Management Policy
- Child Safety Incident Form
- Kid's Rights Fact Sheet
- NDIS Code of Conduct
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Complaint Management Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Staff Privacy Policy
- Worker Engagement Policy