

POLICY 1.15

YOUNG PERSON WELLBEING POLICY

Policy Statement

The health and wellbeing of young people not only affects their immediate quality of life, but it also shapes the future health of our broader society. The Reach Foundation (Reach) has a duty of care to all children and young people involved in Reach's various workshops and activities. This includes workshop participants, Reach crew members and volunteers. Reach will endeavour to provide a physically and emotionally safe environment at all times for all young people engaged with our workshops and activities.

Child safety is an overarching commitment for Reach as part of any young person's wellbeing and this is reflected in all activities, policies and practices. Reach has zero tolerance for abuse of young people and is committed to acting in the best interests of the health and wellbeing of the young people Reach comes into contact with. In achieving a safe environment for all young people, Reach recognises the particular needs of Aboriginal young people, young people from linguistically diverse backgrounds, gender diverse young people and those with a disability.

As part of our commitment to the wellbeing and safety of young people, the Young Person Wellbeing Policy is widely displayed, circulated and promoted:

- Copies are available to parents of all young people enrolled in Reach Community Stream Workshops and Crew Development, as highlighted on Reach Medical & Consent forms.
- Copies are available to any school that books young people into an Education Stream workshop, as highlighted on Reach workshop booking forms.
- Copies are provided to all staff members, crew members, supporters and volunteers with actual or potential access to young people.
- All Reach staff, crew, supporters and volunteers have access to and complete a relevant training program.
- Reach's commitment to the wellbeing and safety of young people is featured annually in the Reach Annual Report.
- The Policy is also available to the public on the Reach website.

Document control			
Policy Owner:	HR Manager	Next Review Date:	3 years
Approver:	Reach Board	Version No:	B
Date last version approved:	16 th Oct 2012	Date this version approved:	30 Oct 2017

Related documentation

3.01 - OHS Policy
Code of Conduct
1.07 - Working with Children Check Policy
1.17- Identifying and Responding to Suspected Harm Policy

Definitions

Duty of Care – the responsibility to do what a reasonable person would do in order to prevent foreseeable harm to someone to whom the person owes a duty of care.

Operating principles

Empowering children and young people

Reach aims to support and inspire young people to experience one or more of the following outcomes:

- Recognition of unique strengths;
- Improved self-awareness and efficacy;
- Strengthened resilience;
- Enhanced emotional and social skills;
- Improved levels of self-esteem, optimism and mastery.

Working with children checks (WWC checks)

Reach commits to having all staff, crew, supporters and volunteers comply with Working with Children screening prior to their term of employment / placement or taking on a volunteer role. In addition, Reach will check referees and check shared values and commitment to the safety and wellbeing of young people. This includes:

- Full and part-time staff
- Crew, Facilitators-in-Training and Facilitators (regardless of age)
- Casual and relieving staff with actual or potential access to young people
- Supporters
- Volunteers with actual or potential access to young people
- Board members
- Students on placement

The relevant Record-Keeping Managers monitor the ongoing validity of WWC checks and follow up with any individuals whose WWC is approaching expiry, as per the WWC check policy.

Staff recruitment, supervision and training

To create the optimum working environment for promoting the wellbeing and safety of young people all Reach staff must participate in a structured induction process, where they are trained in:

- Reach protocols and procedures
- Their role, and the role of others in the organisation
- Protecting the wellbeing of young people including responding to allegations or risk of harm to the young person
- Reach programs (by attendance, where possible).

Reach staff also receive feedback and regular supervision in the form of:

- Regular staff meetings, and formal and informal one-on-one meetings with their manager
- Participation in a formal performance appraisal at least once each year; and
- Participation in education and training programs appropriate to their role, to ensure the wellbeing and safety of young people.

Crew recruitment, supervision and training

Young people (Crew, Facilitators-in-Training and Facilitators) recruited through Crew Development are responsible for the delivery of most of Reach's workshops, and are therefore an important part of creating the optimum workshop environment.

Initially, young people are recruited as Reach New Crew and their training is based around leadership and self awareness. Reach Crew fill voluntary support roles in our workshops. These young Reach Crew then have an opportunity to move into employee roles as Reach Facilitators-in-Training and Facilitators who are trained to create workshops for young people that are designed to challenge and inspire them, in a safe and encouraging way. All Reach Facilitators are required to participate in extensive training, including:

- Personal development and self awareness
- Group facilitation skills
- Code of conduct
- Professional boundaries
- Identifying and responding to disclosures, harm and the risk of harm to the young person

Reach Crew, Facilitators-in-Training and Facilitators receive regular supervision in the form of regular meetings, and formal and informal one-on-one feedback discussions.

All Crew, Facilitators-in-Training and Facilitators are screened in accordance with the Reach WWC checks policy.

Supporter / volunteer recruitment, supervision and training

Reach has a comprehensive Volunteer recruitment process to ensure the organisation provides a safe environment for children and young people accessing our service. All Supporters receive training in Reach's Code of Conduct, Young Person Wellbeing and all relevant OH&S policies and First Aid prior to any contact with young people.

Workshop support

In order to ensure the wellbeing of young people within the safe and non-judgmental environment that is created during many Reach workshops, a comprehensive support structure is in place to support both workshop participants and Reach Crew.

Pre-workshop

Parents and guardians of participants in Community Workshops and of participants aged under 18 in Crew Training are asked to provide Reach with information regarding the wellbeing of their young people via Medical & Consent Forms prior to workshop participation. Participants in Crew Training aged 18 years and over complete their own Medical & Consent Form prior to workshop participation. This information is used to identify any potential adverse emotional or psychological impact to the young person's wellbeing prior to workshop participation. Where possible, additional supports are put in place to ensure safe and positive participation. Any risks identified during the workshop, are passed on to appropriately trained Reach Wellbeing Professionals to ensure comprehensive care.

Workshop delivery

Ground rules relating to confidentiality of information disclosed are laid down at the beginning of each workshop. "What is said in the room stays in the room, unless we believe that you are at serious risk of harm to yourself or someone else." Staff, crew and volunteers are also expected to report any suspected abuse to a Reach Wellbeing Professional, as required by the Reach Identifying and Responding to Suspected Harm Policy.

For any Reach workshops hosted on school premises: the school has a duty of care to ensure that reasonable care is taken to ensure the safety of young people participating in the workshop. Reach Wellbeing Professionals are available for secondary consultation regarding emotional and psychological wellbeing of students prior to or following workshops as requested by the school.

For any Reach community workshops commissioned by Reach: at least one professionally trained psychologist or social worker or authorised counsellor is in attendance. In this instance, all participants are registered and required to provide a Medical and Consent form that includes current mental health information.

For any Reach workshops run for community and sporting groups: the community group has a duty of care to ensure that reasonable care is taken to ensure the safety of young people participating in the workshop. In some instances, community groups will contract Reach to provide a Wellbeing presence in workshops.

For Heroes Days and all levels of crew training: At least one professionally trained psychologist or social worker or authorised counsellor (Wellbeing Professional) is in attendance.

For Heroes Days the onsite Wellbeing Professional:

- Seeks wellbeing information about the participant cohort attending from appropriate school contacts prior to the day
- Briefs teachers and welfare co-ordinators on the support structure in place on the day of delivery
- Makes contact with the appropriate person at each school to ensure follow-up is actioned with any young person who may require it.

Safety for diverse cultures, gender diverse young people and those with a disability

In all workshops an inclusive and respectful environment is created for all young people.

Reach aims to create a culturally safe environment that promotes Aboriginal cultural diversity and young people from culturally, gender and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds. Specific training is provided to ensure the inclusion and safety of all young people.

Risk assessments are completed during planning for all Reach workshops and events. The needs of disabled young people are addressed as part of those risk assessments, ensuring all activities are accessible and safe in order to minimise risk and allow for equal participation.

Supporters

At least one Supporter is in attendance at all community workshops.

Facilitators and Supporters are trained in responding to disclosures made by young people during a workshop regarding possible harm or risk of harm or abuse. Procedures are outlined in the Identifying and Responding to Suspected Harm Policy document.

Workshop follow-up

All concerns relating to the wellbeing of a young person are referred to Reach's Wellbeing Professionals. In each case, professional judgment is used to determine the follow-up required.

Reach responds to wellbeing concerns within the scope of its vision and mission, and is not equipped to provide support in the form of individual counselling / therapy for every young person requiring assistance. Reach endeavours to refer young people requiring support to its external network of wellbeing professionals.

Physical safety and protection measures

The physical safety and security of children / young people involved with Reach are ensured in the following practical ways:

1. Adherence to Occupational Health & Safety legislation
2. Completion of risk assessments and review by a wellbeing professional before all workshops and events in line with Reach's risk management strategy
3. All entries to the Dream Factory and other venues for Reach workshops are either locked or maintained by Reach staff, crew, supporters or volunteers.
4. All visitors to the Dream Factory and other venues are escorted at all times by Reach staff, crew, supporters or volunteers. Reach staff, crew, supporters or volunteers are encouraged to challenge any unescorted visitors with whom they are unfamiliar.
5. Reach Staff, Crew, Supporters and Volunteers are trained in maintaining appropriate professional boundaries in accordance with Reach's Code of Conduct and Young Person Wellbeing policy.
6. Participants are supervised by Reach Crew / Staff / Supporters at all times.
7. If a participant wishes to leave a workshop, they must leave with the person who has signed their consent form. If this is not possible, a Supporter / Crew member (not the participant) must call the person who has signed the consent form and obtain permission for them to leave (and regarding with whom they may leave).
8. Two Reach people over 18 years wait at workshop completion until all young people have departed, and lock up together.

9. At least one First Aid-qualified Crew / Staff / Supporter and a fully equipped First Aid kit are at each workshop. These kits are checked and restocked if required after every workshop.
10. The physical abilities of participants are considered before allowing participation in certain physically demanding activities.
11. Medical and Consent forms are obtained from all participants prior to participation in the workshop. The relevant Program Manager reviews all medical forms, and passes on details of any wellbeing-related details to a Wellbeing Professional, who discusses any concerns with the young person and if necessary their parent / carer or a medical practitioner.
12. All dorm rooms and bathrooms are single sex, and Participants / Staff / Supporters / Crew do not enter the dorm room or bathroom of the opposite sex. In the case of gender diverse, trans or non binary participants, every effort is made to provide a neutral private bathroom arrangement and sleeping arrangements by negotiation to best meet their needs and those of other participants.
13. Staff / Supporters / Crew must not be alone in the dorms with a participant or a Crew member under 18, with the exception of qualified wellbeing staff.

On a camp, Supporters complete regular headcounts, including but not limited to:

1. When boarding the bus (before leaving the Dream Factory)
2. After the stop off for dinner on the way to the camp
3. At every mealtime
4. Before and after any activity that involves leaving the campsite (e.g. cave walk, trip to the beach).
5. Before leaving the campsite on Sunday afternoon

Implementation

It is the responsibility of all Reach staff, Crew, Supporters and volunteers to ensure appropriate implementation of this policy.

Review

This policy is reviewed every 3 years. Where possible, consultation will occur during the review process with young people who are a part of the Reach community, Aboriginal people, culturally linguistically diverse communities, gender diverse young people and people with a disability.