



YOUNG PERSON PROTECTION POLICY

STATEMENT OF INTENTION

The Reach Foundation (Reach) has a moral duty of care to ensure the safety and security of all children and young people involved in Reach's various programs and activities, including program participants, crew members, and volunteers. This duty includes taking all reasonable steps to prevent emotional, physical and sexual abuse. Reach believes each of us has a responsibility to raise concerns of abuse, and this policy details an appropriate response when an allegation is made. Reach will endeavour to ensure a safe environment is maintained at all times for all participants in our programs and activities.

Reach maintains that no offer of paid employment or a voluntary/student placement will be made until the Criminal history Check has been received, assessed and given clearance. A minimum of three referee checks for voluntary placements with access to young people, and three referee checks for all paid employment, are also an essential part of Reach's safety screening process.

Reach maintains the Young Person Protection Policy is developed with the active participation of multiple stakeholders. This is achieved by encouraging stakeholders to participate in an Annual Policy Evaluation and Review. The Policy is presented annually to the Reach Board of Directors for ratification.

The Young Person Protection Policy is widely displayed, circulated and promoted:

- Copies are made available to parents of all young people enrolled in Reach Programs, including the Reach Leadership Program.
- A copy is provided (on request) to each school which books young people into a Youth Day or Rusted program as highlighted on booking forms.
- Copies are provided to all staff members, crew members, supporters and volunteers with actual or potential access to young people, with a requirement that they sign a register to acknowledge that they have read and understood the policy, and are committed to its implementation. Regular training is also provided.
- A policy summary is made available and question asked during the interview process to all applicants for paid and volunteer positions.
- Reach's commitment to child/youth protection is featured annually in one of Reach's quarterly newsletters and displayed permanently through ACCYO accreditation.
- The Policy is referred to on the Reach website.
- The Policy is prominently displayed at the Dream Factory.



DEFINITION OF ABUSE

Reach understands that children and young people can be exposed to physical, emotional, and/or sexual abuse. Abuse can also include neglect, and harassing behaviours like bullying.

Reach recognises that child sex offenders will target child related organisations as a means of approaching children and young people. Sex offenders will often seek out positions which not only provide them with victims but also a professional subterfuge to conceal their abuse.

Reach understands that abuse damages children and young people physically, emotionally and behaviourally. Reach believes that the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount and is vigilant in carrying out the risk management process.

Empowering Children and Young People

Reach believes in the proactive empowerment of children/young people and is committed to the wellbeing and safety of children/young people.

Alongside the commitment to the wellbeing, safety and security of children and young people, Reach is committed to educating children and young people in self-protection. Central themes of Reach programs include empowerment, development of resilience, self-confidence and self-esteem, and a safe environment (see Appendix I). Reach fights against all form of abuse.

STAFF, CREW SUPPORTERS AND VOLUNTEERS

Reach commits to having all staff, crew (17 years and over), supporters and volunteers undergo a Criminal history Check prior to their term of employment / placement, and every two years after that. This includes:

- Full-time staff
- Part-time staff
- Crew (17 years and over)
- 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
- Adults who attend Camp Maasai (treated as volunteers for the purposes of this policy) and any other Corporate programs or special events.
- Police checks must be received at least three weeks prior to any contact with young people.



STAFF RECRUITMENT

Reach takes the following staff recruitment steps to ensure the organisation provides a safe environment for children and young people participating in our programs.

- Written position descriptions and key selection criteria (including minimum qualifications) are developed for all positions within Reach.
- Detailed information regarding the position and organisation is made available to applicants, and applicants are informed of screening mechanisms utilised, to encourage self-assessment of suitability for the position.
- Interviews:
- Only applicants meeting key selection criteria are interviewed.
- Interviews include a panel familiar with the application, position and relevant queries in terms of behavioural and situational based questions.
- Applicants are informed that Reach has a Young Person Protection Policy, and that if successful, they will be required to sign to acknowledge their familiarity with, and commitment to, the Policy. A one page summary is made available during the interview process to all applicants for paid positions.
- For positions which will involve significant interaction with young people, the applicant is invited to join an evening of Crew training (held every two weeks) to provide an opportunity for their interaction style with young people to be observed, and to obtain feedback from the Reach Crew.
- Three reference checks are conducted for a preferred applicant (including verification of applicant's identity and employment history).
- Criminal History Check
- All position descriptions and advertisements pertaining to supervised or unsupervised access to children/young people include the notification that a Criminal History Check is required prior to any offer of employment.
- All staff who may have access to children and young people are screened in accordance with the Reach Police Check Policy.
- Successful applicants are provided with a copy of Reach's Young Person Protection Policy as part of their Contract of Employment, and are required to sign a register to acknowledge that they have read and understood the policy, and are committed to its implementation.
- Staff are employed on a standard probationary period of 3 months. During this period of induction, new staff are trained in relation to understanding, recognising and responding to abuse, neglect and self-harm, and are trained in relation to the rest of their role.

STAFF SUPPORT, SUPERVISION AND TRAINING

To create the optimum working environment where the risks to children and young people are minimised, all Reach staff MUST:

- Contribute to the development, evaluation and review of the Young Person Protection Policy
- 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
- Understanding, recognising and responding to abuse, neglect and self harm
- Reach core programs (usually by attendance)
- Receive regular supervision in the form of regular staff meetings, and formal and informal one on one appointments.
- Participate in a formal performance appraisal at least once each year; and
- Participate in education and training programs to improve knowledge of child abuse protection and best practice in responding to allegations of abuse and neglect.

CREW RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

Young people (crew) recruited into the Reach Leadership Program are responsible for delivery of many of Reach's programs, and are therefore an important part of creating the optimum program environment where the risks to children and young people are minimised.

The recruitment process includes:

- Recommendation from a school or a Reach staff / crew member.
- A one-day workshop (with follow-up) where applicants participate in a variety of activities designed to determine their resilience, their emotional stability, and their ability to connect with, lead and inspire other young people.
- A two-day camp, where applicants participate in further activities, and are closely monitored by Reach staff and crew in an intense environment.

All Reach crew:

- Have the opportunity to contribute to the development, evaluation and review of the Young Person Protection Policy

Are required to participate in regular fortnightly crew training, including:

- Education and training programs to improve knowledge of:
 - Child abuse protection and good practice in responding to allegations of abuse and neglect. (Copies of Child Abuse Training Materials are available to Crew at all times.)
 - Indicators of self-harming behaviours, and good practice in responding.
 - Personal development and self awareness; and
 - First Aid Level 2
- Read and demonstrate knowledge of Young Person Protection Policy via an annual short quiz

All crew reaching the age of 17 are screened in accordance with the Reach Police Check Policy.



SUPPORTER/VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

Reach has a comprehensive Volunteers' Policy to ensure the organisation provides a safe environment for children and young people accessing our service.

SUPPORTERS

Supporters are a special category of volunteer who provide support at Reach programs (courses, camps and Youth Days). Their primary responsibilities are detailed in Appendix II.

Reach takes the following Supporter recruitment steps to ensure the organisation provides a safe environment for children and young people participating in our programs:

Initial contact - The prospective Supporter is made aware of the interview process, including the need for a criminal history check and two reference checks, and is required to complete a basic information form, to encourage self-assessment of suitability for a Supporter role.

Interview - The prospective Supporter is informed of Reach's regular Supporter training sessions and workshops, and is notified that it is compulsory for he/she to attend minimum training prior to participation in programs. Interviews include a panel familiar with the requirements of a Supporter.

Interaction – The prospective Supporter is invited to join an evening of Crew training (held every two weeks) to provide an opportunity for their interaction style with young people to be observed, and to obtain feedback from the Reach Crew.

Reference Checks - Three reference checks are conducted for a preferred applicant (including verification of applicant's identity and employment history).

Criminal History Check – All preferred applicants are screened in accordance with the Reach Police Check Policy.

Documentation – A successful applicant is given copies of:

- Supporters' Manual
- Young Person's Protection Policy; and
- Supporter Contract, which must be signed prior to participation in programs, to acknowledge that they:
- Are committed to being a Reach Supporter; and
- Have read, understood and can show knowledge via a quiz of the Young Person's Protection Policy, and are committed to its implementation.

Supporter Training – Supporters must attend:

- 80% of Supporter meetings
- 80% of Supporter training, which includes instruction on procedures and Supporter responsibilities for the various Reach programs, especially incident reporting (see Appendix II).



- and are encouraged to attend various other training sessions:
- Crew training, in particular training sessions in relation to child abuse / neglect, and self-harm.
- First Aid training

Other Volunteers

Other than Supporters, volunteers at Reach are involved in event committees and administrative activity, and have minimal contact with young people. Those who are deemed to have significant contact with young people, or who have access to databases are to be screened and trained as a supporter.

PROGRAM SUPPORT

Due to the safe and non-judgemental environment that is created during many Reach programs, a support structure is in place to support both program participants and Reach Crew. This takes the form of:

- Psychologist / Social Worker – At least one professionally trained psychologist or social worker will be in attendance at all courses, camps, Rusted workshops and Youth Days. Any risks assessed during research (conducted on some young people prior to courses and camps) or during the program, will be passed on to the Youth Support Team to ensure comprehensive care.
- Supporters – At least one Supporter will be in attendance at all courses and camps.
- For Youth Days, the Reach Youth Support Team or Program Manager will:
- Brief teachers and welfare co-ordinators on the SafetyNet in place
- Make contact with the appropriate person at each school to ensure follow-up is taken with any young person who may require it.
- Crew and Supporters are trained on dealing with disclosures relating to child abuse / neglect, and self-harm. Mandatory reporting procedures are in place.
- Any other concerns are raised with the attending psychologist / social worker, or via an Incident Report with the Reach Youth Support Team. (See Appendix III for a copy of the Incident Report.) In each case, clinical judgement is used to determine the follow-up required:
- In some cases, a single phone call is all that is required.
- In others, regular periodic phone calls may take place.
- Some participants receive a series of individual counselling sessions with the Reach Youth Support Team.
- Others are referred to outside agencies for more specialised services.
- Ground rules relating to confidentiality of information disclosed are laid down at the beginning of each program.
- “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.”
- Where appropriate, contact with young people prior to intensive camps (especially Camp Maasai) is extended beyond Reach group activities (ie courses) to one on one contact with the Reach Youth Support Team. While confidential, such contact enables a more thorough understanding and appreciation of the background and current circumstances of young camp participants. Young



participants of Camp Maasai are contacted by the Reach Youth Support Team following the camp, where necessary.

- Reach is NOT a welfare organisation, and is not equipped to provide support in the form of individual counselling / therapy for every young person requiring assistance. However, Reach endeavours to refer young people to its external network of counsellors, and in some cases provides in-house counselling.
- The Reach Youth Support Team provides confidential counselling and support to members of the Reach crew as necessary.

PHYSICAL SAFETY AND SECURITY MEASURES

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

- Adherence to Federal EEO legislation and the Commonwealth Occupational Health & Safety Act.
- Dream Factory
- All entries to the Dream Factory and other venues for Reach programs are either locked or maintained by Reach staff, crew, supporters or volunteers.
- All visitors to the Dream Factory and other venues will be 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.
- Reach Staff, Crew, Supporters and Volunteers over 18 years are not permitted to spend time alone with Reach Crew or participants under 18 years. When privacy is required meetings with a child / young person may take place in a private room within the Reach office or the Program Venue, but any doors must remain open at all times.

Programs

- Two Facilitators and/or Crew over 18 years will wait at program completion until all young people have departed, and lock up together.
- All Rookys participants are signed in and out of programs by parent / guardian / carer.
- Each program will have at least one fully equipped first aid kit (two for camps), and at least one Crew member or Supporter trained in Level 2 First Aid.
- The physical fitness of program participants will be considered before allowing participation in certain physically demanding activities.
- Consent and medical forms are obtained from all program participants prior to participation in the program. The Program Manager will review all medical forms, and discuss any concerns with the child / young person's parent / carer or a medical practitioner.
- Program participants will be supervised by Reach Crew / Staff / Supporters at all times.
- If a participant wishes to leave a course or camp, 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).
- Reach Staff, Crew, Supporters and Volunteers over 18 years are not permitted to spend time alone with Reach Crew or participants under 18 years. When privacy is required meetings with a child / young



person may take place in a private room within the Reach office or the Program Venue, but any doors must remain open at all times.

Camps

- All dorm rooms and bathrooms will be single sex, and Participants / Staff / Supporters / Crew will not enter the dorm room or bathroom of the opposite sex. Staff / Supporters / Crew must not be alone in the dorms with a participant or a Crew member under 18.

Headcounts must be done by a designated Supporter, who will do ALL headcounts for the camp, as follows:

- When boarding the bus (before leaving the Dream Factory)
- After the stop off for dinner on the way to the camp
- At every mealtime
- Before and after any activity that involves leaving the campsite (e.g. cave walk, trip to the beach).
- Before leaving the campsite on Sunday afternoon
- For any walking/hiking activity at least one supporter, facilitator or staff member will lead and at least one will follow the group. These persons will be allocated walkie talkies.
- For any swimming activity on a camp, there must be at least one Supporter or Crew who has either an Auswim certificate or a Bronze Medallion. There may only be up to 20 swimmers in the water per qualified person. Each person swimming must be allocated a buddy.
- If a participant stays behind at the campsite rather than participating in an activity (which should only occur in the case of sickness) then a supporter AND a crew member over the age of 18 must stay behind with that person.
- In the case of unsuitable jackets or footwear for hikes, participants of Camps will be offered the use of Reach gear for the duration of the activity.
- Reach Staff, Crew, Supporters and Volunteers over 18 years are not permitted to spend time alone with Reach Crew or participants under 18 years. When privacy is required meetings with a child / young person may take place in a private room within the Reach office or the Program Venue, but any doors must remain open at all times.

Young Peoples Social Events

- Two Facilitators and/or Crew over 18 years will wait at event completion until all young people have departed, and lock up together.
- Reach Staff, Crew, Supporters and Volunteers over 18 years are not permitted to spend time alone with Reach Crew or participants under 18 years. When privacy is required meetings with a child / young person may take place in a private room within the Reach office or the Program Venue, but any doors must remain open at all times.
- Each event will have at least one fully equipped first aid kit and at least one Crew member or Supporter trained in Level 2 First Aid.
- No illegal drugs or alcohol at any young persons Reach program or event.



RESEARCH & EVALUATION

Formal research and evaluation is carried out on Reach program participants and Crew, to evaluate program effectiveness and ensure the wellbeing of program participants and Crew.

The Reach Research and Evaluation Committee oversee development and implementation of research and evaluation, including ethics applications. The Committee has expertise in:

- Child and adolescent mental health
- Program evaluation
- Qualitative and quantitative research methodologies
- Statistical analysis

Reach obtains written consent from a parent or guardian prior to commencing any formal research on a young person.

Protocols are developed for administration of research questionnaires, which are administered and assessed by Psychologists. Where necessary (as per the protocol) a risk assessment will be performed on the young person, with appropriate follow-up.

IMPLEMENTATION

It is the responsibility of the Reach Community to ensure appropriate implementation and training of this policy.

Annual Policy training will be conducted with Staff, Crew and Supporters. The policy will be provided to volunteers with actual or potential access to young people.

All Staff / Crew / Supporters / Volunteers will be expected to sign a register indicating that they have read, understood, and are committed to the implementation of the Policy. An annual quiz of this information will be undertaken by the aforementioned.

Any queries regarding the policy should be directed to the Youth Support Team.

