



THE REACH FOUNDATION

YOUNG PERSON PROTECTION POLICY

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1. 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 (young leaders), 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 a Working with Children and/or Police Check have 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, on the Reach Website.
- Copies are made available to each school that books young people into a Heroes Day, Grounded or Birdcage program, on the Reach website, 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.
- 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.

2. DEFINITION OF ABUSE

Child Abuse refers to an act or omission by parent or caregiver (e.g. guardian, teacher, babysitter) that endangers or impairs a child's physical or emotional health and development. 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 understands that abuse damages children and young people physically, emotionally and behaviourally.

Physical abuse refers to a situation in which a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury inflicted by a parent or caregiver. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the inadvertent consequence of physical punishment, physically aggressive treatment of a child, or neglect, e.g. slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing.

Emotional abuse refers to a situation in which a child's parent or caregiver repeatedly rejects the child or uses threats to frighten the child. This may involve name-calling, put-downs or continual coldness from the parent or caregiver, to the extent that it significantly damages the child's physical, social, intellectual or emotional development.

Neglect refers to a situation in which a child's parent or caregiver fails to provide the child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision, to the extent the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed.

Sexual Abuse refers to a situation where a child or young person is used by an older and bigger child, adolescent, or adult for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification. Physical force is sometimes involved. There are two categories of sexual abuse:

1. Contact e.g. Touched and fondled in sexual areas
Forced to touch another person's sexual areas
Kissed or held in a sexual manner
Forced to perform oral sex
Vaginal or anal intercourse
Vaginal or anal penetration with an object or finger.

2. Non Contact e.g. Obscene phone calls/obscene remarks
Voyeurism
Exposure to pornography
Sexually intrusive questions or comments
Forced to self-masturbate or watch others masturbate
Indecent exposure.

Long term effects of Sexual Harm

Child sexual abuse damages children physically, emotionally and behaviourally. Both its initial effects and long-term consequences impact on the individual, on their family and on the community. Long term consequences may include:

- Sexual dysfunction (such as flashbacks, difficulty in arousal, avoidance of, or phobic reactions to sexual intimacy)
- Promiscuity
- Prostitution
- Discomfort in relationships
- Isolation
- Marital problems
- Low self-esteem
- Depression
- Mental health problems (such as eating disorders, self-harm)

Note: The *presence* of an indicator does not always indicate that a child *is* being abused; and the *absence* of the signs does not indicate that the child is *not* being abused.

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 believes that the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount and is vigilant in carrying out the risk management process.

3. EMPOWERING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – REACH SAFETYNET

Reach believes in the proactive empowerment of children/young people and is committed to the wellbeing and safety of children/young people. To ensure the maximum safety and effectiveness of Reach programs, Reach has an established a SafetyNet Structure, comprising:

- Psychological Wellbeing
- Child Safety
- Research and Evaluation

Psychological Well-Being

The psychological well-being arm of the SafetyNet program refers to creation of safe spaces at Reach programs, the discreet psychological support provided before during and after all Reach programs, and the community network of referrals both in and out of Reach programs.

Central themes of Reach programs include empowerment, development of resilience, self-confidence and self-esteem, and a safe environment (see Appendix I). Reach facilitators focus on creating a safe space for young people to express themselves and feel comfortable enough to discuss their personal challenges. At the outset of every Reach program, facilitators clearly explain a standard set of agreements that all participants are expected to abide by, including:

- Respect for yourselves and for each other. This includes both respect when others are talking, and respect for people's belongings.
- The requirement and limits of confidentiality, i.e. "What's said in the room stays in the room, unless we believe there is a risk of harm to you or someone else."

Participants are also informed that they may experience a range of emotional reactions during Reach activities. They are asked to stay in the room at all times, to ensure that they participate in the debriefing of each activity, thereby gaining the learning/value intended.

In addition, at least one member of the Reach Youth support Team (YST) is present at each Reach program. The YST, including Sessional Youth Support Workers, is comprised of psychologists and social workers who oversee the psychological well-being of participants, staff, crew (young leaders) and volunteers. At programs, their role is to provide professional support to Reach facilitators, crew and participants where there is a concern about a participant (i.e. the conduct of a participant extends beyond normal reactive emotion or behaviour) and where assistance is beyond the means of the program facilitators. The YST identify young people at risk and provide initial psychological assessment and intervention and/or referral as required.

The YST also assists facilitators with program planning, conducts pre-program participation assessments on young people showing signs of risk, and conducts post-program debriefing sessions for program teams as well as professional supervision sessions for Reach facilitators.

Child Safety

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. The Child Safety arm of the SafetyNet program refers to Reach's policies and procedures established to ensure the safety and well being of young people participating in Reach programs, training in child protection, as well as standard selection and recruitment procedures for staff crew and volunteers.

All members of Reach are required to read, understand and abide by the Reach Young Person Protection Policy, Reach Police Check and Working with Children Check Policies, and Reach Risk Management Procedures. All Reach Staff, Crew and Volunteers receive annual training on these policies as well as on Professional/Therapeutic Boundaries and Self-Care.

Research and Evaluation

Reach ensures programs are effective, relevant and monitored through continual evaluation. Reach's Research and Evaluation Committee developed the Well-Being in Young People Study, a longitudinal project which supported the impact of Reach's programs on reducing young people's symptoms of depression while increasing their self-esteem, mastery, optimism and sense of control over internal states.

4. STAFF, CREW, SUPPORTERS AND VOLUNTEERS

Reach commits to having all Staff, Crew (17 years and over), Supporters and Volunteers undergo a Police and/or a Working with Children Check prior to their term of employment / placement.

There are 2 levels of checks that Reach conducts depending on the nature of program and the level and nature of the interaction between adults and young people associated with Reach (participants and crew under the age of 18):

1. Any adults who have sustained involvement in Reach and, as a consequence, **'sustained interaction'** with young people involved with Reach, are required to undergo both a **Working with Children Check and a National Police Check**. This includes:
 - Full-time staff
 - Part-time staff
 - Crew (18 years and over)
 - Casual and relieving staff (e.g. Sessional Youth Support Workers) with actual or potential access to young people
 - Supporters
 - Volunteers with actual or potential access to young people
 - Life coaches (who have regular meetings with Reach crew and or participants)
 - Board members
 - Students (18 years and over) on placement
 - RAMP Program mentors (partnership agency Whitelion is responsible for conducting these checks)
 - Any other adults who may participate in multiple Reach programs without direct supervision of another Reach member holding a current Working with Children Check.

By law, Working with Children Checks must be repeated every five years.

2. Any adults 18 years and over who are involved with Reach on a **'one off' basis where the involvement includes an overnight stay are required to undergo a National Police Check**. Examples of this would include:

- Adults participating on Camp Maasai, Breaks, Kickstart camp or IGA camp (overnight stay).
- Young people participating on Camp Maasai, Breaks, Kickstart or IGA Camp who are already 18 years or over. Where this occurs:
 - Participants must be provided with a clear explanation of why a police check is being conducted, the fact that a record won't necessarily prevent them from participating, and that the results will be strictly confidential
 - Crew / Supporters must be briefed to monitor the 18+ young people's interactions with other participants.

It is a Reach requirement that any adult who participates in a Reach program **on a one-off basis (Program Volunteers) be under the supervision of Reach staff and/or Crew with a current Working with Children Check at all times**. They are provided with information about Reach, (Appendix I), Volunteer guidelines for appropriate behaviour and the Reach Code of Conduct (Appendix II), and the Reach Young Person Protection Policy.

Reach utilises the Victoria Police "volunteer price" for Working with Children and Police Checks where possible, and invites volunteers to cover this cost.

5. 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.
- For positions which will involve significant interaction with young people, the applicant is invited to join an evening of Crew training 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).
- Working with Children Check
 - All position descriptions and advertisements pertaining to supervised or unsupervised access to children/young people include the notification that a Working with Children and a Police 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 Working with Children and 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. New staff are trained in relation to understanding, recognising and responding to abuse, neglect and self-harm at the first available opportunity.

6. STAFF, SUPPORT, SUPERVISION & 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, including meetings with Reach management, attendance at Reach programs and participation in Reach Basics Day and policy training sessions 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
- 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.

7. CREW RECRUITMENT & TRAINING

Young people recruited into the Reach Leadership Program (Crew) 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:

- Are expected to attend a "Reach Basics training day" to be kept up to date on Reach policies and procedures
- Are required to have a good understanding of the Young Person Protection Policy before they are accredited as a crew member (to be assessed through an annual quiz and the crew review system)
- Have the opportunity to contribute to the development, evaluation and review of the Young Person Protection Policy
- Are required to participate in regular crew training, including:
 - Education and training programs to improve knowledge of:
 - Issue relating to Young Persons well-being, including child protection and good practice in responding to allegations of abuse and neglect. (Copies of Training Materials are available to Crew at all times.)
 - The Reach Code of Conduct and appropriate professional boundaries
 - Personal development and self awareness; and
 - First Aid Level 2
 - Applied Suicide Intervention Training (ASIST). This is a requirement for accreditation as a facilitator.

In accordance with the Reach Working with Children check and Police Check Policy, all crew are screened with a police check once they have reached the age of 17 and with a Working with Children Check once they have reached the age of 18.

8. 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 (Workshops and Weekends Away). Their primary responsibilities are detailed in Appendix III.

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 Working with Children and/or Police check and three 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 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).
- **Police Check** – All preferred applicants are screened in accordance with the Reach Working with Children Check and Police Check Policy.
- **Documentation** – A successful applicant is given copies of:
 - Supporters' Manual
 - Young Person's Protection Policy
 - Reach Code of Conduct; 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 III).

Supporters 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.

9. PROGRAM SUPPORT

A support structure for both program participants and Reach Crew is in place to ensure a safe, non-judgemental environment is maintained during Reach programs. This takes the form of:

Prior to Reach programs

- Prior to Reach workshops and weekends away the Youth Support Team conduct assessments via phone or in person to gain a more thorough understanding and appreciation of the background and current circumstances of program participants as required, in order to best support them during their participation. In some cases, it is recommended that the participant seek alternative service options.
- Crew and Supporters are trained in procedures for dealing with disclosures relating to child abuse / neglect, and self-harm. Staff, crew and supporters are trained to report suspected cases of concern to the Youth Support Team. The Youth support Team manages and reports incidents of suspected child abuse/neglect to the Department of Human Services as required.

During and following Reach programs

- Ground rules relating to confidentiality of information disclosed are laid down by the facilitators at the beginning of each program: *"What is said in the room stays in the room, unless we believe there is a risk of harm to you or someone else."*
- At least one Supporter will be in attendance at all workshops and weekends away.
- At least one and in most circumstances two, professionally trained psychologists or social workers will be in attendance at all workshops, weekends away and Heroes Days. Any risks assessed during these programs will be passed on to the Youth Support Team to ensure comprehensive care.
 - Where concerns are raised with the attending psychologist / social worker or via an Incident Report Form (See Appendix IV) to the Reach Youth Support Team, clinical judgement is used to determine the follow-up required:
 - A phone call or in-person session to assess the needs of the young person
 - Crisis intervention where there is a risk of harm to the young person or someone associated to the young person.
 - Information and referral to a relevant community or specialist service
 - Active support and referral to access a relevant community or specialist service
 - Where workshops are held at school, it is the school's responsibility to provide this professional support.
 - For Heroes Days, the Reach Youth Support Team will:
 - Provide immediate support as required to ensure the safety of the participants present.
 - Make contact with the appropriate person at each school to ensure appropriate follow-up is provided for any young person who may require it.
- 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 specialist support services.
- The Reach Youth Support Team provides confidential counselling and support to members of the Reach crew as necessary.

10. CODE OF CONDUCT

Reach seeks to:

- Clearly outline acceptable behaviour in order to minimise the risk of child abuse occurring within the organisation.
- Provide practical guidance to staff, volunteers, parents and service users about the types of behaviour that are and are not acceptable within the organisation.

Reach has two Codes of Conduct:

- One Code that all Reach Staff and Crew must abide by, and
- One Code that all other adults connected to Reach (whether it be ongoing connection, or one-off program attendance) must abide by.

CODE OF CONDUCT - STAFF & CREW

The following guidelines have been written to ensure the on going safety of Crew, young people, staff, board members, and volunteers participating in Reach. The code is intended as a guide rather than an exhaustive set of rules. Where a situation is unclear, additional consultation is essential. These guidelines are given to all members of Reach.

As a Reach Staff or Crew member, you are expected to:

1. Conduct yourself in a manner consistent with your position as a positive role model to young people.
2. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all young people, taking into account gender, ability, cultural background, religion, sexual orientation and lifestyle choices.
3. Treat all young people with respect and take notice of their reaction to your words, tone of voice and manner.
4. Respect the privacy of others and be aware of your own limits regarding the private information you choose to reveal.
5. Keep information and stories revealed by anyone during a Reach program confidential, unless there is a risk of harm to that person or others. If you are concerned or uncertain, you should approach the Reach Youth Support Team for advice.
6. Take responsibility for assessing risk and managing the safety of work and activities involving young people.
7. Be aware that non-sexual physical contact, suggestive comments and rough physical games may be misconstrued as sexual, inappropriate and or/culturally insensitive.

As a Reach Staff or Crew member, you MUST NOT:

8. Be alone with a Reach participant at the Reach office or Reach activities. If you need privacy, you may meet with a participant in a private room within the Reach office or the Program Venue, but any doors must remain open at all times and a Reach Facilitator (other than yourself, if you are a Facilitator) must be informed of your whereabouts. (Youth Support Team excepted)
9. Meet with any Reach participant outside of Reach premises unless arranged through the Reach Dreamcatcher program.
10. Give your contact details (e.g. phone number, email, myspace or personal address, etc.) to a Reach participant, or contact a Reach participant except through the Reach office.
11. Enter into an intimate/sexual relationship with any Reach participant.
12. Enter into an intimate / sexual relationship with any Crew member who is in a more junior position in the organisation. In any case, relationships between crew members are discouraged.
13. Provide transportation to any Reach participant or Crew member under the age of 18, unless written permission has been provided by that participant's/crew member's parents/guardians.
14. Do things of a personal nature that a Reach participant or Crew member can do for himself or herself.
15. Consume or be under the influence of illicit drugs at any Reach program or event, or provide another member of Reach with illicit drugs at any time.
16. Consume or be under the influence of alcohol at any Reach program or provide another member of Reach under the age of 18 with alcohol at any time. If you are over the age of 18, moderate amounts of alcohol may be consumed only at Reach social functions where alcohol is being served.

Knowledge of these criteria will be instilled through regular Crew training.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The following guidelines have been written to ensure the on going safety of Crew, young people, staff, board members, and volunteers participating in Reach. The code is intended as a guide rather than an exhaustive set of rules. Where a situation is unclear, additional consultation is essential. These guidelines are given to all members of Reach.

As a member of Reach, you are expected to:

1. Conduct yourself in a manner consistent with your position as a positive role model to young people.
2. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all young people, taking into account gender, ability, cultural background, religion, sexual orientation and lifestyle choices.
3. Treat all young people with respect and take notice of their reaction to your words, tone of voice and manner.
4. Respect the privacy of every young person, and exercise your right to reveal your own private information only as far as you wish to.
5. Keep information and stories revealed by anyone during a Reach program confidential, unless there is a risk of harm to that person or others. If you are concerned or uncertain, you should approach the Reach Youth Support Team for advice.
6. Take responsibility for assessing risk and managing the safety of work and activities involving young people.
7. Be aware that non-sexual physical contact, suggestive comments and rough physical games may be misconstrued as sexual, inappropriate and or/culturally insensitive.

As a member of Reach you MUST NOT:

8. Be alone with a Reach participant or Crew member under 18 years at the Reach office or Reach activities. When privacy is required, meetings with a 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 and a Reach Staff member or Facilitator must be informed of your whereabouts.
9. Meet with any Reach participant or Crew member under the age of 18 outside of Reach premises unless arranged through the Reach DreamCatcher program. We also recommend that you do not meet with young people over 18.
10. Provide your contact details (e.g. phone number, email, myspace or personal address, etc) to a Reach participant or crew member under the age of 18, or contact a Reach participant or crew member under the age of 18 except through the Reach office.
11. Enter into an intimate/sexual relationship with any Reach participant, or any Crew member under the age of 18. Relationships with Crew 18 and over are strongly discouraged.
12. Provide transportation to any Reach participant/Crew member under the age of 18, unless written permission has been provide by that participant's/crew member's parents/guardians.
13. Do things of a personal nature that a Reach participant or Crew member can do for himself or herself.
14. Consume or be under the influence of illicit drugs at any Reach program or event, or provide another member of Reach with illicit drugs at any time.
15. Consume or be under the influence of alcohol at any Reach program or provide another member of Reach under the age of 18 with alcohol at any time. If you are over the age of 18, moderate amounts of alcohol may be consumed only at Reach social functions where alcohol is being served.

11. 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.
- Adherence to the Reach Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Procedure Manual
- Adherence to the procedures outlined in the Emergency Protocols document
- 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 and/or Supporters 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 and the Youth Support Team will review all medical forms, and discuss any concerns with the young person, their parent/guardian and/or and, with permission, other support services, as required.
 - 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 and another Reach member must be informed
- 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 and another Reach member must be informed.

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 and another Reach member must be informed.
- 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 alcohol at any young persons Reach program or event.

No illegal drugs are allowed at any Reach program or event.

12. RESEARCH & EVALUATION

In the event that formal research is carried out on Reach program participants and Crew for the purpose of evaluating program effectiveness or ensuring the well-being of program participants and Crew, a Reach Research and Evaluation Committee will be formed. The committee will oversee the development and implementation of research and/or evaluation projects, including ethics applications.

Members of the committee will have the following expertise:

- 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.

13. RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The Children, Youth and Families Act, 2005 is the Victorian State legislation which outlines issues pertaining to the *Children's Court of Victoria*, *Children and Criminal Law* and *Child Protection*. The Act highlights the following grounds for notification when a child is in need of protection:

- s.162 (a) - abandonment
- s.162 (b) - death or incapacitation of carer
- s.162 (c) - physical abuse
- s.162(d) - sexual abuse
- s.162(e) - emotional/psychological abuse
- s.162(f) - neglect

The Role of the Department of Human Services

The Child Protection Service is part of the Victorian Department of Human Services. It provides services to protect children and young people from significant harm caused by abuse or neglect within the family. It also aims to ensure that children and young people receive services to deal with the impact of abuse and neglect on their wellbeing and development.

Any person who believes, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person needs protection can notify the Child Protection Service. It is the Child Protection worker's job to assess and where necessary further investigate if a child or young person is at risk of significant harm. If a person makes a notification in good faith, they cannot be held legally liable – regardless of the outcome of the notification.

Mandated Reporters

At present within Victoria, legislation requires that police, doctors, nurses, teachers and school principals are mandated to notify their concerns, suspicions, or reasonable grounds to the statutory child protection authority when there are reasonable grounds that physical or sexual abuse is occurring. Included in the Act to be mandated in the future are youth workers, social workers and psychologists.

14. RESPONDING TO THE RISK OF HARM

Although not currently legally mandated to make notifications, Reach is committed to ensuring the well-being and safety of young people as outlined in the Reach Codes of Conduct. This commitment extends to all Reach Staff, Crew, Supporters and Volunteers. Relevant guidelines and procedures are outlined:

- During annual training conducted for all members of Reach
- In the Reach Youth Support Team Handbook, provided to and discussed with all Sessional Youth Support Workers during their period of induction
- In the Reach Crew Handbook

Limits of Confidentiality

According to the Reach Code of Conduct, Reach Crew, Supporters, Volunteers and members of Staff are expected to “keep information and stories revealed by anyone during a Reach program confidential, unless there is a risk of harm to that person or others”. This is to be clearly explained by Reach facilitators to all Reach participants at the beginning of each program.

Risk of harm is considered to exist in any circumstance where it is believed, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person is likely to self-harm or is in need of protection because the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, from physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect. In such circumstances, the obligation to protect the safety of the child or young person overrides the obligation to keep information revealed by them absolutely confidential. However, the confidentiality of both the young person and the alleged perpetrator must still be maintained by passing such information on **only** to relevant parties as guided by Reach’s guidelines for responding to suspected harm. Where appropriate, the young person should be informed as to whom information is to be passed on to and why.

Responding to the Risk of Harm

It is important to remember that children and young people are vulnerable and dependent on adult care. They are usually powerless to stop abuse and require adult assistance to intervene. Accordingly, Reach believes that it is the responsibility of all Reach Crew, Supporters, Volunteers and Staff to respond appropriately to disclosures or suspicions of abuse occurring either within or outside of the organisation, as outlined in Reach’s ‘Guidelines for Identifying and Responding to Suspected Harm’.

15. POLICY EVALUATION & REVIEW

Reach is committed to evaluating and reviewing the Young Person Protection Policy annually in accordance with the following evaluation / review process:

- The Reach Leadership Team will meet biannually to determine potential risks and danger points for young people involved in Reach activities, and identify ways to manage these risks, and incorporate them into the policy.
- Staff and Crew (Facilitators) will review / evaluate the Policy each January by identifying:
 - Significant experiences in the past year regarding the Policy;
 - Problems with the Policy which arose in dealing with these experiences; and
 - Functional issues in relation to the Policy.
- Staff and Crew will seek input from all stakeholders including children / young people, staff, supporters and board members.
- The Policy is presented to the Reach Board of Directors for ratification.
- The ratified Policy is widely displayed, circulated and promoted.
- The ratified policy is made available to all crew and staff as part of a manual and introduced at Crew training.

16. 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 all staff and 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.

17. APPENDIX I - ABOUT REACH

OUR VISION

That every young Australian has the support and self-belief to fulfill their potential and dare to dream.

OVERVIEW

Often the biggest barrier between a teenager and his or her goals is a lack of self-belief and support. To encourage this essential self-confidence Reach run interactive workshops, weekends away and large-scale events instilling feelings of self-belief in teenagers. Our specially trained “Crew” of inspirational young leaders run 16 different programs for nearly 60,000 young people across Australia each year, helping them connect with each other.

We believe that every young person has something special to offer that is often hidden behind fear, anger or hurt. By creating an encouraging, supportive and stimulating environment, we help teenagers discover for themselves they can do anything they set their minds to.

Independent research shows that Reach helps teenagers to decrease symptoms of depression and improve overall levels of self-esteem, optimism, and feelings of control over themselves and their lives.¹

BACKGROUND

Reach, a non-profit organisation, was established in 1994 by Jim Stynes OAM (AFL Brownlow Medallist, youth motivator, and Victorian of the Year 2003) and Paul Currie (drama coach and film director).

By creating “safe spaces” and a positive peer group experience for young people, Reach provides an environment where they can have a great time, develop trust and openness, and feel comfortable enough to express their concerns, discuss their aspirations and recognise that they are not alone.

Since its inception, Reach has run preventative programs to positively impact on over 350,000 young Australians. Reach seeks to build young people’s confidence and self-esteem, in order to prevent negative emotions and destructive behaviours that can lead to psychosocial difficulties. We have learnt over many years that starting early to build resilience and emotional awareness in young people reduces problems often faced later, such as conflict with family and other adults, homelessness, substance abuse, and suicide. Therefore, the main focus of our programs is on prevention and early intervention.

By not focusing on the actual behaviour, but rather understanding the reasons behind it, the origins of negative behaviour are identified, and through a personal empowerment process, the young person is able to redirect their energy towards more positive outcomes.

Reach’s work is derived from a variety of models including Adlerian psychology, NLP and psychodrama. The conceptual framework that drives the programs is based on the Hero’s Journey, a seven-stage model originally developed by Joseph Campbell.

¹ The Well-Being in Young People Study

WHAT MAKES REACH UNIQUE?

Part of Reach's successful connection with young people is our belief in young people inspiring other young people. We have a "Crew" of over 100 young leaders, aged 16-25 years, who are trained to lead programs and inspire other young people.

We use the emotive mediums of popular youth culture (music, film, comedy, dance) to engage young people and create a connection that makes them receptive to a serious message.

To ensure the maximum safety and effectiveness of our programs, Reach has an established 'SafetyNet' structure including:

- Discreet psychological support for participants and crew at every Reach program.
- Policies and Procedures ensuring the well-being of young people
- Accreditation with Australian Council of Children & Youth Organisations (ACCYO) as a child safe organisation.

We believe in working in partnership with other organisations supporting young people for the purposes of providing complementary programs, developing programs in partnership and referring our young people to specialist services.

We value growth, integrity, passion, honesty, connection and respect

We admire courage, and we think that a little bit of madness, and lots of passion and energy, help on the journey to discovering greatness.

THE REACH PHILOSOPHY

Reach helps young people:

- Feel empowered and inspired by providing an environment that is safe, raw and supportive
- Be resilient
- Have a feeling of belonging in a safe space
- Reduce self-deprecation through confidence building
- Network with other young people and supportive parties
- Become mentors for others

Reach celebrates:

- Human triumph over adversity
- The potential in all young people
- Authentic expression
- The power of a positive peer group
- Acts of support for young people

Reach fights against:

- Negative peer group influences
- Welfare mentality in young people
- All forms of abuse

Reach values:

Growth

Growth means we acknowledge and accept who we are now and take responsibility for creating opportunities to learn and grow by challenging ourselves to explore the unknown, break out of our comfort zones and be open and willing to take action to change.

Integrity

Integrity means we are acting with courage and discipline to ensure an alignment between our words, actions and the purpose of Reach.

Passion

Passion means we are demonstrating optimism and enthusiasm for our purpose by using our heart, fire, inspiration and strength in all that we do.

Honesty

Honesty means we are authentic and open, with the intention to deliver truth in a Sensitive and constructive way, and that we have the courage to speak from our heart.

Connection

Connection means we are open, compassionate and aware of ourselves and others and we engage with trust, understanding and vulnerability.

Respect

Respect means we are appreciating and valuing the people, opportunities and property we are privileged to work with. Respect means we acknowledge, accept, value and listen to ourselves and others, without judgement.

18. APPENDIX II – REACH POLICY FOR PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

ABOUT REACH

Often the biggest barrier between a teenager and his or her goals is a lack of self-belief and support. To encourage this essential self-confidence, Reach runs workshops, weekends away and large-scale events, instilling feelings of self-belief in teenagers.

Our specially trained Crew of inspirational young leaders run 16 different programs for nearly 60,000 young people each year, helping them connect with each other. By creating an encouraging, supportive and stimulating environment, teenagers discover for themselves that they can do anything they set their minds to.

Independent research shows that Reach helps teenagers improve overall levels of self-esteem and feelings of control over their lives.

REACH IS A CHILD SAFE ORGANISATION

Reach was accredited as a “child safe” organisation by the Australian Council of Children and Youth organisations (ACCYO) in 2005. This means that Reach has undergone an assessment process to ensure that it has the necessary policies and procedures in place to ensure all young people who come in contact with the organisation are as safe as practically possible.

Part of this process includes Working with Children and Checks and or Police Checks for any person having involvement with young people at Reach and the Code of Conduct (please see following page).

WHO'S WHO AT PROGRAMS?

Facilitators

Reach facilitators are inspirational young people aged 20-25 who have undergone approximately four years of Reach crew training and are responsible for planning and delivering Reach's programs. There will generally be two facilitators at any Reach program.

Crew

Reach Crew assist the facilitators with program delivery by supporting and motivating the participants throughout the program. Crew vary in their levels of training and experience from 1-5 years. There will generally be 3-8 Reach crew at any Reach program.

Supporters

Supporters are adult Reach volunteers who have undergone an extensive screening and training process. The supporters attend to the practical/logistic aspects of the program- i.e. checking off the role, collecting money etc. as well as participating in the program alongside the young people.

Youth Support Workers

Reach Youth Support Workers are Psychologists or Social Workers who are responsible for ensuring the Psychological wellbeing of all participants and crew at programs. If you are concerned about a participant or crew member at any stage throughout a program, please speak with the Youth Support Worker. There are 1 – 2 Youth Support Workers in attendance at every Reach program.

VOLUNTEERS CODE OF CONDUCT

The following guidelines have been written to ensure the on going safety of crew, young people, staff, board members, and volunteers participating in Reach. The code is intended as a guide rather than an exhaustive set of rules. Where a situation is unclear, additional consultation is essential. These guidelines are given to all members of Reach.

As a Reach Volunteer you are expected to:

1. Conduct yourself in a manner consistent with your position as a positive role model to young people.
2. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all young people, taking into account gender, ability, cultural background, religion, sexual preferences and lifestyle choices.
3. Treat all young people with respect and take notice of their reaction to your words, tone of voice and manner.
4. Respect the privacy of every young person, and exercise your right to reveal your own private information only as far as you wish to.
5. Keep information and stories revealed by anyone during a Reach program confidential, unless there is a risk of harm to that person or others. If you are concerned or uncertain, you should approach the Reach Youth Support Team for advice.
6. Take responsibility for assessing risk and managing the safety of work and activities involving young people.
7. Be aware that non-sexual physical contact, suggestive comments and rough physical games may be misconstrued as sexual, inappropriate and or/culturally insensitive.

As a Reach Volunteer you MUST NOT:

8. Be alone with a Reach participant or Crew member under 18 years at the Reach office or Reach activities. When privacy is required, meetings with a 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 and a Reach Staff member or Facilitator must be informed of your whereabouts.
9. Meet with any Reach participant or Crew member under the age of 18 outside of Reach premises unless arranged through the Reach DreamCatcher program. We also recommend that you do not meet with young people over 18.
10. Provide your contact details (e.g. phone number, email, myspace or personal address, etc) to a Reach participant or crew member under the age of 18, or contact a Reach participant or crew member under the age of 18 except through the Reach office.
11. Enter into an intimate/sexual relationship with any Reach participant, or any Crew member under the age of 18. Relationships with Crew 18 and over are strongly discouraged.
12. Provide transportation to any Reach participant/Crew member under the age of 18, unless written permission has been provide by that participant's/crew member's parents/guardians.
13. Do things of a personal nature that a Reach participant or Crew member can do for himself or herself.
14. Consume or be under the influence of illicit drugs at any Reach program or event, or provide another member of Reach with illicit drugs at any time.
15. Consume or be under the influence of alcohol at any Reach program or provide another member of Reach under the age of 18 with alcohol at any time. If you are over the age of 18, moderate amounts of alcohol may be consumed only at Reach social functions where alcohol is being served.

EXPECTATION OF VOLUNTEERS

Participation

There is often an expectation that you will participate in the program alongside the participants. This may mean that you join in on small/large group discussions, participate in warm up games, or whatever the activities may be. We find that the young people quickly feel comfortable with adults in the group when they recognise that they are participating on the same level as them and often benefit from the insights that adult participants provide.

Self Disclosure

Certain activities may require you to express your thoughts on issues of a more personal nature i.e. "what has been the greatest challenge in your life?" We recognise that this can be challenging, and recognise that you will only reveal as much information as you feel comfortable with. Please feel free to discuss this with the Youth Support Worker on your program, who will be able to provide you with some guidance on how to manage this.

Code of Conduct

Please read the Code of Conduct document thoroughly. This policy has been developed to protect all people involved with Reach and to ensure that adults involved with the programs understand the expectations around boundaries, appropriate/inappropriate behaviours etc.

Support

The programs can be quite emotionally challenging at times and you may find that they touch on your own personal issues; this is quite common and very normal. Please feel free to discuss this with the Youth Support Worker at your program, or if you feel affected after the program, we encourage you to call the Reach Youth Support Team to discuss your feelings.

19. APPENDIX III – SUPPORTER RESPONSIBILITIES

Pre-Program

Before attending a Reach program, it is the responsibility of the Supporter to:

- Understand their role as a Supporter
- Attend training in understanding, recognising and responding to abuse, neglect and self harm
- Meet with the program Crew to understand the plans for the program, and the expectations of the Supporter.

As program participants arrive, it is the responsibility of the Supporter to:

- Collect money
- Mark the roll
- Collect consent/medical forms, examine each medical form, checking for any food requirements or medical conditions, e.g. asthma or epilepsy, that the Crew need to be aware of when planning/running activities (asthma, for example, may be brought on by excessive crying).
- Inform the facilitators of any pertinent information
- Collect / hold any medication (for camps), and manage dispensing to young person in line with medical form / parental information.
- Respond to any concerns / questions from parents / guardians.
- Raise awareness of Crew to any lone participant, who requires absorption into the group. (Supporters should not approach the young person, as this may alienate them from the other young people)
- Provide logistical support to Crew (room setup, pens, paper, candles, etc)

During Programs

It is the responsibility of the Supporter to:

- Actively participate in all activities, while maintaining a degree of responsibility. Active participation is overridden only where the safety/well being of participants is concerned, e.g. a participant tries to leave the room, a participant is injured, etc.
- Subtly monitor participants at all times, to ensure safety/well being. Supporters must be aware that it is not always the participant in the spotlight who requires attention.
- Complete an incident report (see Appendix IV) / discuss with the Psychologist/Social Worker in attendance if they note any young people disclosing abuse, neglect or tendencies to self harm, or if they believe a young person should be followed up for any reason. This information must be passed on to the Psychologist/Social Worker (Sessional Youth Support Worker) present and the Youth Support Team.
- Support the Crew through active participation, but with an awareness that it is important not to give advice or put words in people's mouths. The role of both the Crew and the Supporters is to "Guide, not advise"
- If a course is running over time, leave the room and inform parents / guardians that the program will end shortly.
- Perform headcounts at various points on camps (before leaving, after stops, at mealtimes, during off-site activities etc).

Post-Program

At the end of a program, it is the responsibility of the Supporter to:

- Attend the debrief session, support and give feedback to the Crew (regarding activities, concerns about any young people, Crew performance etc)
- Liaise with the Sessional Youth Support Worker regarding any concerns that arose during the program.
- Remain at the program site until the last participant has left. Supporters are NOT to be left alone (1:1) with any young person – there must always be another Reach person (over 18) in attendance.

20. APPENDIX IV - INCIDENT REPORT

INCIDENT REPORT FORM 2008

Please hand/fax: (03) 94164939 this form to the Reach Youth Support Team within 24 hrs.

Name of Young Person: _____ D.O.B: ____/____/____
(First Name) (Surname)

Address: _____

Contact Phone: _____ Preferred contact time: _____

Name parent/guardian: _____ Contact Phone: _____

Program name & location: _____ Date ____/____/____

INCIDENT/ISSUE (PLEASE BE SPECIFIC, INCLUDE FACTS ONLY & DATES IF POSSIBLE):

IMMEDIATE ACTION TAKEN:

FOLLOW UP REQUIRED:

Please inform the young person this information will be passed on to the youth support team.

Permission from young person to follow-up: Yes / No (please circle)

Name of person completing this form: _____

Role at Reach: _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____