Child Safe Code of Conduct

Our Commitment

All staff and volunteers at Uplift Therapy are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. We recognise that child safety is everyone's responsibility and that we share collective responsibility for creating and maintaining a child-safe culture.

We acknowledge that:

- All children have the right to feel safe and be safe at all times
- Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, and LGBTIQ+ children may face additional barriers to safety and require specific consideration
- Power imbalances exist between adults and children, and we must not exploit these imbalances
- Our duty of care to children and young people is paramount and overrides other considerations
- Child safety requires active participation and vigilance from all team members

Staff and Volunteers Will:

Promote Safety and Wellbeing

- Act in accordance with our child and young person's safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- Promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all children and young people in the service
- Take all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from abuse and harm, including foreseeable risks
- Create and maintain physically and psychologically safe environments for all children and young people
- Identify and mitigate risks to children and young people's safety and wellbeing as required by our risk assessment and management policy or process
- Be a positive role model to children and young people in all conduct with them

Respectful and Ethical Practice

- Behave respectfully, courteously, and ethically towards children, young people, families, and other staff

- Demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries
- Set clear boundaries about appropriate behaviour between myself and the children and young people in my organisation – boundaries help everyone to understand their roles
- Understand and implement trauma-informed and child-centred approaches in all interactions with children and young people
- Treat everyone with respect and honesty and ensure equity is upheld (including staff, volunteers, students, children, young people and parents), regardless of different race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes and religious beliefs

Listen and Respond

- Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children and young people, particularly if they communicate that they do not feel safe or well (verbally or non-verbally)
- Listen and respond appropriately to the views and concerns of children and young people
- Actively support children and young people's agency and participation in decisions affecting them, including having their views genuinely considered
- Involve children and young people in making decisions about activities, policies and processes that concern them
- Encourage children and young people to 'have a say' on issues that are important to them

Cultural Safety and Inclusion

- Consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children, young people and their families
- Create an environment that promotes and enables children and young people's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children, young people and their families
- Respect and promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and their families
- Respect and promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- Respect and promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children and young people with disability and their families

Reporting and Compliance

- Respond to any concerns or complaints of the child or young person's harm or abuse promptly and in line with our service's policy and procedure for receiving and responding to complaints
- Report all suspected or disclosed child and young person harm or abuse as required by the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 and our policy and internal and external reporting procedure
- Understand my obligations under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 and report to Child Protection when required

- Alert the relevant authorities regarding suspected or confirmed risk of harm to children or young people, and to contact the NDIS Commission also of any suspected abuse or neglect of NDIS Participants.
- Comply with Victorian requirements if relevant and in accordance with policy and procedure on internal and external reporting
- Comply with our protocols on communicating with children
- Comply with the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 and these policies and procedures on record keeping and information sharing
- Disclose personal or sensitive information about a child or young person, including images of a child or young person, only when the child, young person and their parent or legal guardian consent or when required to do so by our policy and procedure on reporting

Professional Development and Contribution

- Contribute, where appropriate, to policies, discussions, learning and reviews about child and young person's safety and wellbeing
- Complete all required child safety training and maintain up-to-date knowledge of child safety practices, including annual mandatory reporting training.
- Understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility and that I share collective responsibility with all staff and volunteers

Staff and Volunteers Will Not:

Harmful or Unlawful Behaviour

- Engage in any unlawful activity with, or concerning a child and young person
- Engage in any activity that is likely to physically, sexually or emotionally harm a child or young person
- Engage in any form of physical violence towards children or young people, including corporal punishment
- Work with children and young people while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs

Inappropriate Relationships and Boundaries

- Develop any 'special' relationships with children and young people that could be seen as favouritism, such as the offering of gifts or special treatment
- Arrange personal contact, including online contact, with children and young people they are working with for a purpose unrelated to our activities
- Do things of a personal nature that a child or young person can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes, and if needing to support a child to do so, ensure there is another adult present

Discrimination and Disrespect

- Discriminate against any child or young person because of age, gender, cultural background, religion, vulnerability or sexuality
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children or young people, or show or provide children and young people with access to inappropriate images or material

Privacy and Technology

- Disclose personal or sensitive information about a child or young person, including images of a child or young person, unless the child, young person and their parent or legal guardian consent or unless required to do so by our policy and procedure on reporting
- Photograph or video a child or young person without consent from the child/young person (where age-appropriate) and their parent/guardian, except where required for educational or therapeutic documentation as per policy
- Use technology or social media to harm, exploit, or communicate inappropriately with children and young people

Failure to Act

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child or young person's harm or abuse
- Ignore behaviours by other adults that may constitute reportable conduct or child abuse

Consequences of Breach

Breaches of this Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment or engagement. Serious breaches may also be reported to relevant authorities, including Victoria Police and the Commission for Children and Young People.

Acknowledgment

I acknowledge that I have read, understood, and agree to comply with this Child Safe Code of Conduct. I understand that adherence to this Code is a condition of my employment/engagement with Uplift Therapy.

I, _____ have read this Child Safe Code of Conduct and agree to abide by all elements in this document.

Signed:_____

Date: _____

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