

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING GUIDELINES



Child, Youth and Family

1. Purpose and Intent

The City of Casey is committed to ensuring all children attending a Child, Youth and Family managed service, program or event are provided with a safe and secure environment that supports and protects their mental health and wellbeing. The guideline outlines the responsibilities of all Child, Youth and Family staff, including students and volunteers, in supporting positive mental health and wellbeing in children and young people who access our services.

2. Scope

This guideline will apply to all staff (including students and volunteers) who interact with children and young people attending programs, events and services managed by the Child, Youth and Family department at the City of Casey.

3. Definitions

Key Term	Definition
United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child	An international human rights treaty that outlines the fundamental rights of every child, defined as any human being below the age of eighteen.
United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	An international human rights instrument that establishes minimum standards to protect the survival, dignity, and rights of Indigenous peoples worldwide.
Victorian Child Safe Standards	Eleven mandatory standards that apply to all organisations in Victoria that provide services or facilities for children. The standards are designed to protect children from abuse and harm, guiding organisations to create safe, inclusive, and accountable environments.

4. Background

Mental health and wellbeing are foundational to positive life outcomes, and the City of Casey is committed to supporting and enhancing the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people who participate in our programs, services and events.

This guideline reflects principles outlined in the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child, the Victorian Child Safe Standards, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous

Peoples. This approach ensures every child has the right to be supported to grow in a safe and healthy environment, with families and communities playing a crucial role in nurturing them.

City of Casey aims to:

- Support the provision of a safe, healthy, inclusive and empowering environment for all children attending a Child, Youth and Family managed children's service or event.
- Establish children, families and Child, Youth and Family staff as key partners in supporting children and young people.
- Develop partnerships between key stakeholders to strengthen coordinated responses and improve service access.

In Kindergarten Programs, the importance of supporting children's wellbeing is recognised in the National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety. In Maternal and Child Health services, the importance of supporting children's and families' wellbeing is recognised through the Victorian Maternal and Child Health Program and its associated service standards and practice guidelines.

5. Responsibilities for this guideline

Child Youth and Family Management and Leadership	• Provide and maintain safe and inclusive environments that mitigate risks to physical and psychological health and safety. • Ensure staff are trained in processes for reporting and responding to incidents. • Outline expectations and empower leaders and supervisors to actively maintain and promote environments that support mental health and wellbeing. • Promote a culture of shared responsiveness and ownership relating to reporting and addressing health, safety and wellbeing risks. • Support staff to access mental health and wellbeing training, and information to enhance their knowledge and skills. • Promote and support the mental health and wellbeing of staff. • Maintain the confidentiality of any mental health concerns disclosed by staff, ensuring information is only used or shared where lawful, necessary and appropriate, and that staff privacy is protected at all times in accordance with privacy legislation and Council policies. • Provide culturally safe, inclusive and responsive environments that respect and value diversity.
All Child, Youth and Family Staff	• Provide an inclusive and empowering social environment for children, young people and their families by promoting a culture of fairness, respect and empathy. • Ensure age-appropriate behaviour management strategies are utilised, and punishment or inappropriate discipline are never used with children and young people. • Follow Council policies and processes to respond to any instances of bullying, discrimination, and/or harassment. • Ensure interactions with children and young people are warm, trusting and respectful, and support their overall development. • Provide a safe and inclusive physical environment for children, young people and their families.

	• Encourage participation by children, young people and their families in developing and implementing mental health and wellbeing initiatives. • Engage with local health professionals, services and other organisations to promote mental health and wellbeing, or to provide a specialised service to children, young people and their families. • Utilise appropriate knowledge and skills to support children and young people at risk of, or experiencing social, emotional and/or behavioural issues which may impact their mental health and wellbeing. • Utilise a trauma informed approach to engaging with children and young people. • Complete training including trauma informed practice training as required to ensure appropriate skill and knowledge base. • Actively seek and respond to the views, ideas and feedback of children and young people in a developmentally appropriate way. • Identify and respond to early signs of mental health and follow appropriate referral and escalation pathways as required.
Parents/Families and service users	• Share responsibility for children and young people's health, wellbeing, safety and development. • Provide the service with details of any relevant information pertaining to their child's social, physical, emotional or mental health and development so that the service may provide appropriate support. • Contribute to creating inclusive and respectful service environments.

6. Associated documents and attachments

This guideline should be read in conjunction with guidelines for:

- Interactions with Children and Young People guidelines
- Student Participation guidelines
- Volunteer Participation guidelines
- Acceptable Workplace Behaviours Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Health Safety and Wellbeing Policy

7. Relevant legislation

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Education and Care Services National Law (Victoria)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2012)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act (2004)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (2005)
- Victorian Child Safe Standards (2016)
- Child, Youth and Families Act (2005)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008)

8. Resources

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)

9. Child Safety, Access and Inclusion

The City of Casey is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where protecting children from abuse is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of Council, its employees, contractors, and volunteers. Council has zero-tolerance of child abuse.

Council aims to promote a culture of inclusion, respect and equity. We strive to ensure that all children, young people and families regardless of their background, ability, gender or identity are welcomed and supported. We are dedicated to providing equitable access to our services.

Council expects that all staff act on incidents of child abuse, racism, or any type of discrimination.

10. Monitoring, evaluation and review

The City of Casey will ensure:

- Regular monitoring of the implementation of this guideline and its associated documents including training and compliance.
- This guideline and its associated documents are kept up to date with current legislation, policy and best practice.
- Review and evaluation of this guideline and its associated documents as part of the service's review cycle, or as required.

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11. Document History

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