



## Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct

### Overview and Purpose

This policy was written in line with the DHS Child Safe Environments Compliance, and to demonstrate the strong commitment of Carnation Lane to child safety, and to establishing and maintaining a child-safe and child-friendly environment.

### Scope

As a sole trader, this policy applies to the owner of Carnation Lane. If Carnation Lane expands services, this policy will apply to all employees, volunteers, work placement students and contractors. Each person working within Carnation Lane will be referred to throughout this policy collectively as 'workers'. All workers are required to agree in writing to accept and act in accordance with the policy.

### Commitment to the Safety of Children and Young People

Carnation Lane respects all children and young people, and welcomes them regardless of their abilities, sex, gender, or socio-economic or cultural background. We are committed to providing a safe environment for all children and young people. This policy complies with our obligations under the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017, the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016, and aligns with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

### Communication

This child safe policy is available on our Facebook page, on request, and will be provided to all new workers during orientation to the service. We encourage and respect the views of children and young people and involve them in decision making as appropriate. We provide clear age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate explanations to children and young people including their right to safety, their right to be listened to and that they can provide feedback or make a complaint if they have a concern. Complaints and feedback can be provided to any worker or they can ask their parent/guardian to do this on their behalf. We will listen to and act upon any complaints or concerns that a child or young person raises with us.

### Code of Conduct

Caring for children and young people brings additional responsibilities. All workers within Carnation Lane are responsible for promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:

- Acting in accordance with the child safe policy at all times and taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people.
- Treating everyone with respect and honesty, ensuring equity is upheld.
- Being a positive role model to children and young people and conducting themselves in accordance with this.



- Setting clear professional boundaries and maintaining appropriate behaviours with children and young people.
- Actively listening and responding appropriately to the views and concerns of children and young people.
- Being alert to bullying behaviours and responding promptly and appropriately.
- Ensuring the children have the right to bring an adult into their sessions to promote their sense of safety.
- Being alert to children and young people who have been harmed, or may be at risk of harm, and reporting this to the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78) per the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017.
- Responding quickly, fairly and transparently to any complaints made by a child, young person and/or their parent/guardian, and consulting with the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) around said concerns where appropriate.
- Encouraging children and young people to 'have a say' on issues that are important to them.

#### Workers must not:

- Engage in physical touch of any child or young person unless therapeutically warranted, consented to by the child and caregiver, and supervised by their caregiver. Refer below for further information.
- Develop any 'special' relationships with children and young people that could be seen as favouritism such as the offering of gifts or special treatment
- Discriminate against any child or young person because of age, gender, cultural background, religion, vulnerability or sexuality.

Breaches or suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct should be reported as soon as practicable to me either in person, by telephone on 0490402973 or via email at [admin@carnationlane.com.au](mailto:admin@carnationlane.com.au).

Breaches or suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and dealt with quickly, fairly and transparently. Any worker who breaches the Code of Conduct will face disciplinary action and depending on severity of the breach, the worker may have their employment terminated.

Alternatively, breaches or suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct should be reported as soon as practicable to the AASW - [Making a Complaint | AASW](#).

#### **Recruitment**

In accordance with the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016, our organisation is registered with the DHS Screening Unit and we link all Working with Children Checks (WWCC) to our registration.



All persons running the organisation (e.g. business owner, directors, managers etc) are required to have a current, not prohibited WWCC. All workers in the organisation over the age of 14 years, who will be working or who have contact with children and young people must hold a current, not prohibited WWCC issued by the Screening Unit of the Department of Human Services, provide evidence of this prior to employment and renew this every 5 years. A person will be taken to have contact with a child if:

- the person has physical contact with the child; or
- is in close physical proximity to the child; or
- communicates with the child (whether orally or by written, electronic or other means).

We will verify the accuracy of all WWCCs in the DHS Screening Unit portal as required by law.

We will immediately contact the Department of Human Services Screening Unit when we become aware of assessable information regarding any person involved with our organisation, including any serious criminal offence, child protection information, or disciplinary or misconduct information.

## **Training, Supervision and Support for Workers**

Carnation Lane staff engage in regular supervision per the AASW standards for Accredited Mental Health Social Workers (at least 10 hours per year). Supervision is conducted by a supervisor who is familiar with and experienced in child safe practices.

Carnation Lane staff must remain up to date in 'Safe Environments Through their Eyes' training and must maintain this by completing a 3hr refresher every 3 years. This enables workers to be up to date with mandated reporting obligations.

Carnation Lane staff must adhere to regular professional development per the AASW standards for Accredited Mental Health Social Workers in order to ensure their professional skills are up to date and provide the best possible outcomes for children and their families.

## **Reporting and Responding to Harm or Risk of Harm**

Carnation Lane aims to ensure that children and young people are safe from harm and risk of harm. Section 17 of the Safety Act defines 'harm' to mean physical or psychological harm (whether caused by an act or omission), including harm caused by sexual, physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect.

Mandated reporters in our organisation are workers who provide services to children and young people and those who hold a management position in the organisation the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of those services to children and young people.

Mandated reporters have a legal obligation to notify the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78 as soon as practicable if they have a suspicion that a child or young person has been harmed or may be at risk of harm. If the child or young person is at immediate risk, the worker will report to South Australia Police (SAPOL) on 000. Even if not a mandated reporter, any person can report harm or risk of harm to a child or young person. The individual who identifies the



harm or risk of harm is encouraged, and can be supported by Carnation Lane staff, to make the report to authorities. Information about making appropriate reports of harm or risk of harm is available from the South Australian Department for Child Protection website.

All adult workers (even if not a mandated reporter) have a legal obligation to report child sexual abuse by another worker to the police and to protect a child from sexual abuse by another worker. Failure to meet these obligations may be considered a criminal offence.

Following a report to CARL or SAPOL Carnation Lane will support the child or young person by referring the child, young person or their family to other appropriate services if required. Where appropriate, we will continue to provide a service to the child, young person and their family. We will document all information received regarding the report and store this securely in the client file on Halaxy.

If a worker is reported to CARL or SAPOL for causing harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, they will be removed from any role that involves working with any child or young person until authorities have concluded their investigation.

## **Reporting and Responding to General Complaints or Feedback**

Providing opportunities for complaints and feedback ensures that children, young people and their families feel valued and respected and enables us to improve the quality of our service. Children, young people and their families are informed that they can provide feedback or make a complaint at their first appointment when they commence a service. Compliments, complaints or feedback can be provided verbally to any worker or direct to Carnation Lane either by telephone on 0490402973, via email at [admin@carnationlane.com.au](mailto:admin@carnationlane.com.au), in person at any of our office locations or in writing to Carnation Lane, PO Box 2008, Whyalla Norrie, SA 5608.

We will deal with complaints and feedback received promptly, sensitively and fairly. We will:

- Listen to the complaint/feedback.
- Clearly document and securely store decisions and actions taken in response to complaints and feedback.
- Discuss concerns in supervision or seek advice from the AASW.
- Provide feedback to the child or family as soon as possible.
- If the child, young person or their family is not happy with the outcome from the complaints process they can contact the AASW via <https://www.aasw.asn.au/information-for-the-community/making-a-complaint>.

## **Risk Management**

It is of utmost importance that Carnation Lane remains a safe space for all children, young people and their families. Carnation Lane works with some of the most vulnerable children and has a commitment to ensuring all workers are up to date with Working with Children Checks.



Should Carnation Lane be informed that any worker has been accused of mistreating a child, the worker will be immediately unable to work with children and families until they have been investigated by authorities and cleared of wrongdoing.

Should a worker of Carnation Lane be convicted of crimes against a child, Carnation Lane will follow the direction of SAPOL in management of the issue and inform relevant clients.

Physical contact is rarely required as part of psychological therapy. Any physical contact must be appropriate to the delivery of therapeutic services being provided and be evidence based in accordance with the AASW's approved Focused Psychological Strategies. Where physical contact is required, this is undertaken in a safe way by explaining why contact is required and what will happen, and asking the child/young person and caregiver for their permission before proceeding. If the child does not wish to engage in such strategies, then the worker will change their approach.

Workers must not communicate with children or young people via social media. All contact should be done professionally via established business processes. If a child makes contact via the business social media page, general service information can be provided and the child will be encouraged to make contact with a guardian.

## **Supervision**

Children and young people may be supervised by parents/guardians/workers depending on clinical assessment/needs/service being accessed. Where this makes the child feel safe, the caregiver is encouraged to remain present for sessions.

## **Privacy and confidentiality**

All documents containing confidential information are stored electronically in Halaxy. If referral or other sensitive documents are received via email they will be uploaded to Halaxy and deleted.

Workers must not disclose information regarding any child or young person without written consent of the child, young person and their parent/guardian unless there are child safety concerns.

## **Related Documents**

Client Information Brochure Child Safe Environments training – (Through Their Eyes) Reference Documents Source

Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA), Government of South Australia  
<https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/>

National Principles for Child-Safe Organisations Australian Human Rights Commission  
<https://childsafef.humanrights.gov.au/>

Information Sharing Guidelines, Department of Premier & Cabinet <https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/>



Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016, Government of South Australia  
<https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/>

## Review of policy

Carnation Lane will, at a minimum, review this policy and the related procedures once every 5 years as required by the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017, or when:

- New or added risks are identified for children or young people, which may require a change in the policy or procedures.
- A critical incident where a child or young person has experienced harm through involvement in this service.
- Concerns are raised by anyone about child safety or welfare in this service

## Legislative changes/requirements

We will lodge a new child safe environments compliance statement with the Department of Human Services each time we review and update this policy.

## Version history

Version 1.0	08/10/2024
Version 1.1	17/12/2024