

# CHILD PROTECTION AND REPORTING HARM POLICY

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Responsible person	DTOSS	Approved by CEO	November 2024
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## INTRODUCTION

This policy has been developed to promote and enhance the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable people in relation to their contact with Bravehearts personnel.

This policy applies to all Bravehearts staff, students, volunteers, contractors and National Board and Committee members ("Bravehearts Officer").

## DEFINITIONS

**Bravehearts Officer:** any member of the Bravehearts' National Board, staff, students, volunteers or contractors.

**Bravehearts' National Board:** means the Directors and relevant officers of the organisation.

**Child Protection and Vulnerable Person Officer:** a responsibility given to an employee to ensure key areas of the organisation consistently have the protection of children and vulnerable people at the forefront of decisions and are current in legislation and information of best practice.

**Child/Young Person:** A child is any person who has not yet reached the age of 18.

**Client<sup>1</sup>:** The clients of Bravehearts services are predominately children and adolescents who have experienced or have been identified to be at specific risk of experiencing child sexual assault and exploitation, however included are adult survivors of child sexual assault and exploitation. Survivors' non-offending adult familial support base and partners are also supported by Bravehearts.

**Client<sup>2</sup>:** Bravehearts provides services to people across the lifespan who have been affected, may have been affected, or have been identified to be at risk of being affected by child sexual abuse and exploitation. Bravehearts also provides therapeutic support to 10 - 17-year-olds (up to 25 with approval from the Director of Therapeutic and Support Services) who have or are at risk of exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours.

**Child Safe Organisation:** A child safe organisation is one that creates a culture, adopts strategies, and takes action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people.

**Contractor:** a person, or company contracted by Bravehearts to undertake a piece of work/function with contract agreement.

**Director of Therapeutic and Support Services (DOTSS):** A staff member who reports directly to the CEO and has the responsibility of management of the Operations Department Managers and Therapeutic and Support Services.

**EAP:** An employee assistance program (EAP) is a work-based intervention program designed to assist employees in resolving personal problems that may be adversely affecting the employee's performance. Programs are delivered at no cost to employees by stand-alone EAP vendors or providers.

**LGBTIQA+:** The term LGBTIQA+ is used to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual people, or people otherwise diverse in gender, sexual orientation and/or innate variations of sex characteristics.

**NDIS:** National Disability Insurance Scheme, which is a new way to support a better life for hundreds of thousands of Australians with a significant and permanent disability and their families and carers.

**Reasonable Grounds:** A reasonable basis to believe that a definable activity has been, or may be committed

**Leadership Team (LT):** Internal senior management of Bravehearts, consisting of, but not limited to: Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Director of Research (DR), National Grants & Bequests Manager (NGBM), Director of Therapeutic & Support Services (DOTSS), Director People and & Culture (DPC).

**Staff:** People employed under the current Employment Agreement as casual, part time or full-time officers of the organisation.

**Stakeholders:** Any agency, government or non-government, who have a vested interest in the outcomes achieved by Bravehearts.

**Students:** Tertiary students formally completing an internship or placement with Bravehearts.

**Supervisor:** A staff member with responsibility for supervising Bravehearts staff.

**Volunteers:** A person who undertakes work for Bravehearts without being paid.

**Vulnerable People:** A child or children; or an individual aged 18 years and above who is or may be unable to take care of themselves or is unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation by reason of age, illness, trauma or disability, or any other reason.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is:

1. To promote and enhance the safety and welfare of children, vulnerable people and clients.
2. Establish the principles which will govern the organisational response to disclosures or concerns of harm/risk of harm to children or vulnerable people.
3. Establish the principles which will govern the organisational response to disclosures or concerns that a child or vulnerable person may be a risk to themselves and/or others.
4. To ensure the existence of clear procedures for clients, staff, volunteers and management that guide actions in line with the policy principles.

5. To enable Bravehearts to address all disclosures or concerns of harm and risk of harm by ensuring that the information is recorded, considered, resolved and monitored and informs future policy/procedure development and review.
6. To ensure that Bravehearts Officers and clients are aware of the content of this policy and its associated related documents and procedures.

## **Bravehearts Child Protection Statement of Commitment**



## POLICY

1. Bravehearts shall implement and maintain a formal procedure for disclosures or concerns of harm/risk of harm to children and vulnerable people based on the following principles:
  - The safety of children and vulnerable people is the paramount consideration.
  - Children and vulnerable people are among the most vulnerable members of our society.
  - Children and vulnerable people need to know and believe that they have the right to be safe at all times.
  - Children and vulnerable people are entitled to basic human rights regardless of special needs, cultural, or socioeconomic factors, and to have those rights protected.
  - Children and vulnerable people are people in their own right, deserving of respect, care and protection.
  - Children and vulnerable people are entitled to the support of a person to act as an advocate on their behalf and to protect them and their voice.
2. Bravehearts will implement and maintain a formal procedure for disclosures of harm or concerns that a client may be at risk to themselves and or others, to make sure that all staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibility as mandatory reporters as defined by Bravehearts policy.
3. If a victim is now over the age of 18, Bravehearts will still report the offence to police, unless there is a reasonable excuse for not reporting the sexual abuse. Reasonable excuses include if you have received information about the victim who is now an adult, and you reasonably believe they do not want to reveal it to the police. However, if there is still any current risk to children, Bravehearts will assume there is no reasonable excuse not to report.
4. Bravehearts will ensure that all staff, students, and volunteers who work directly with clients and children or vulnerable people are employed with recognised and appropriate qualifications in accordance with their role in the organisation.
5. Bravehearts will ensure all staff, students, volunteers and National Board and Committee members hold a current *Working with Children Suitability Card* (in accordance with state and territory legislation) before commencing working or volunteering at Bravehearts.
  - a. Bravehearts keeps a *Working with Children Register* for all Bravehearts Officers and National Board and Committee members.
  - b. A registered health practitioner with the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency (AHPRA) may be exempt from obtaining a *Working with Children Check* when employed with Bravehearts.
  - c. AHPRA registration must be always maintained by the employee and a record will be maintained on the employee's files.
6. Bravehearts will ensure all staff, students and volunteers who will be offering support to NDIS clients will hold a Worker Screening check (in accordance with state and territory legislation) before commencing working or volunteering at Bravehearts supporting NDIS clients. Bravehearts keeps a NDIS Worker Screening Register for all staff, students and volunteers. Where there is no valid Worker Screening check the person may not work with NDIS clients.
7. The relevant Departmental Manager will make sure that staff, students, volunteers, contractors and National Board and Committee members are aware of:

- a. the definitions of sexual abuse/exploitation, abuse and neglect as contained in the relevant State and Territory Acts through the induction process.
  - b. the policy and procedures of reporting any suspicion, concerns or disclosure of child and vulnerable people abuse and neglect through the induction process.
  - c. the policy and procedures of reporting any suspicion, concern or disclosure that a client may be at risk of harm to themselves and or others as required by duty of care through the induction process.
8. Bravehearts will ensure staff and National Board and Committee members undertake ongoing training and development for fulfilling reporting obligations.
9. Bravehearts will ensure that all clients (including children and vulnerable people) are made aware of this policy and Bravehearts mandatory reporting and incident management procedures. This will be shared through:
  - a. consent forms,
  - b. client handbooks,
  - c. Bravehearts website and
  - d. regularly informed via communication with any Bravehearts officer.
10. All information relating to a disclosure or concerns of harm to a client, will be recorded, considered, and acted upon as appropriate to each case.
11. All disclosures or concerns of harm to a client will be addressed in a confidential manner with only the people directly involved in reporting, investigating or resolving the issues having access to information about the matter (if applicable).
12. If applicable, the relevant Department Manager shall ensure that the inquiry process is impartial. No assumptions will be made, nor will any action be taken until all relevant information has been collected and considered.
13. The relevant staff member will ensure that any cultural, LGBTIQA+ or disability factors will be considered in the investigating process.
14. All Bravehearts staff, students, volunteers and National Board and Committee members must follow Bravehearts Code of Conduct.

## INTERNAL RELATED DOCUMENTS

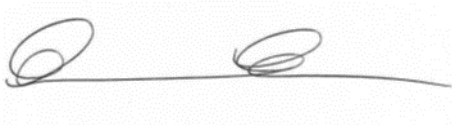
- Bravehearts Child Protection Incident Report
- Bravehearts Child Protection Notification Form
- Client Rights and Access to Confidential Information Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints, Complaints & Feedback Register
- Compliments Complaints and Feedback Policy
- Extended Bravehearts Departments Child Protection and Reporting Harm Procedure
- Incident Management Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Therapeutic and Support Services Child Protection and Reporting Harm Procedure
- Training and Education Child Protection and Reporting Harm Procedure



EXTERNAL REFERENCES

- Care and Protection of Children Act 2007
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Criminal Code (Child Sexual Offences Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2020 (Qld)
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators; November 2021, Version 4
- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/>
- QLD, [Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services](#): Child Protection Act 1999
- Queensland: Commission for Children and Young People and the Child Guardian Act 2000
- Queensland: Human Rights Act 2019 <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/your-rights/human-rights>
- The Children's Protection Act 1993
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004
- Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011

AUTHORISATION



Alison Geale  
CEO  
November 2024

DOCUMENT CONTROL – VERSION HISTORY

Date	Updates
November 2024 Updated to Version No. 007	Updates To Branding and Format Inclusion Of Bravehearts' Child Protection Statement of Commitment Definitions Updated Update to External References Table of contents