

# Brent Street's Child Safe Policy and Procedure

## Our Purpose

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of Brent Street Pty Ltd to provide an environment for children and young persons that is free of violence and exploitation and provide services that foster their health, developmental needs, spirituality, self-respect and dignity.

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## Context

This policy reflects our commitment to provide a safe environment where every person has the right to be treated with respect and is safe and protected from harm.

It complies with our obligations under the Family Law Act 1975 (Cth.) and the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth.), the Children's Protection Act 1993, including:

- **Section 8B – 8D – child safe environments and criminal history assessments for people working with children; and**
- **Section 11 – Mandatory reporting.**

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)  
Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)

It also complies with the Child safe environments: Principles of good practice and Child safe environments: Standards for dealing with information obtained about the criminal history of employees and volunteers who work with children issued by the Chief Executive. (Section 8A, Children's Protection Act 1993).

## Scope

This policy, from the date of endorsement, applies to all people involved in the organisation, including:

- employees (permanent and casual)
- volunteers
- contractors
- sub-contractors
- work experience students
- indirect service providers
- any other individual involved in this organisation

Note: In this policy, the term "employee" is intended to cover all persons occupying any position listed above

## Commitment to child safety

All children who come to Brent Street have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people accessing our services and the welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where all children are valued and feel safe.

In accordance with the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012, the safety, welfare and well-being of children and, in particular protecting them from child abuse, is the paramount consideration in the operation of this policy and the Working with Children Check Procedures.

This policy was developed in collaboration with all our employees, volunteers, the children who use our services and their parents.

## Children's participation

Brent Street encourages and respects the views of children and young people who access our services. We listen to and act upon any concerns that children, young people or their families raise with us. We teach children what they can do if they feel unsafe.

We ensure that children, young people and their families know their rights and how to access the complaints procedures available to them.

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.

## Recruitment practices

Brent Street Pty Ltd takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. We employ a range of screening measures and apply best practice standards in the screening and recruitment of employees and volunteers. We interview and conduct referee checks on all employees.

All staff working with children at Brent Street are required to have a current Working With Children Check (WWCC). Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 and its Regulation 2013

The WWCC conducts a criminal history assessment for people working with children, as set out in Section 8B of the Children's Protection Act 1993. Criminal history assessments are required for anyone within our organisation that:

- has regular contact with children and is not directly supervised at all times;
  - works in close proximity to children on a regular basis and is not directly supervised at all times; or
  - supervises or manages persons who:
    - have regular contact with children or
    - work in close proximity to children on a regular basis; or
    - has access to sensitive records relating to children or young people.
- Exemptions from this requirement may apply in some circumstances.

## Code of Conduct

All staff must abide by the Brent Street Code of Conduct and/or Code of Conduct for Teaching Staff at Brent Street (as applicable to your position) including Child Protection guidelines for employees and volunteers of Brent Street.

## Support for employees and volunteers

Brent Street seeks to attract and retain the best employees, trainers and volunteers. We provide support and supervision, so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We ensure that employees/trainers/volunteers who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training so that their capacity is developed and enhanced to promote the establishment and maintenance of a child safe environment.

Strategies we have implemented include:

- All new employees undergo induction and receive a copy of our child safe policy and code of conduct.
- An Administration Manager & Heads of Departments to provide support and advice to employees, trainers and volunteers

## Reporting and responding to suspected child abuse and neglect

The NSW Family & Community Services (FACS) provide guidelines and services to support children at risk of abuse or neglect. Information about making appropriate reports of abuse or neglect is available from the Family & Community Services website <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/Protecting-kids> or you can call the Child Protection Helpline 13 21 11

If you suspect abuse or neglect you should discuss this with your Supervisor or the Administration Manager as soon as practicable, they can provide advice and support or contact the Child Protection Helpline on your behalf. You may be requested to provide further information at a later date, so please ensure your contact information is up to date.

We ensure that support is also available for the employee making the report, particularly where an ongoing service is provided to the child, young person and their family.

You may require support during and following and suspected or reported child related issues. Support services listed below can be accessed confidentially at any time:

- Mental Health Line- 1800 011 511
- Lifeline- 13 11 14
- Beyond Blue- 1300 22 44 36

\* there are many services available, this is just a selection

### Strategies to minimise risk

To help maintain a safe environment for children, Brent Street organisation review its risks, policies and procedures regularly and implements strategies to minimise and manage these risks.

Policies and procedures may address (but are not limited to):

- Code of Conduct for Teachers & Students
- Protecting privacy and confidentiality
- Professional Development

Evaluation of these strategies and the development of additional strategies to minimise and control risks to children and young people occur as part of our ongoing risk management process.

### Harassment/bullying

Brent Street opposes all forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying. We take this issue seriously and encourage anyone who believes that they, or another person, has been harassed, discriminated against or bullied to raise this issue with their course coordinator, reception or management.

### Communication

Brent Street will ensure that everyone to whom this policy applies is aware of and has had an opportunity to read the policy.

We also ask employees, volunteers and casual teachers (where appropriate) to sign a written statement indicating that they have read and will abide by our child-safe policy. We retain a copy of all signed statements.

### Related policies and procedures

- Code of Conduct for Teaching Staff
- Trainer Assessor Employment Checklist
- Child Safety Policy and Procedure
- WWCC verification

Approved by:	Date:	Review date:
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In developing this sample policy and template, the Department for Education and Child Development has drawn on resources prepared by the Play by the Rules initiative ([www.playbytherules.net.au](http://www.playbytherules.net.au)), the NSW Commission for Children and Young People ([www.kids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au)).

## APPENDIX 1

### Child Protection guidelines for employees and volunteers of Brent Street

Caring for children and young people brings additional responsibilities for employees, contractors, casuals and volunteers of this organisation.

All employees, contractors, casuals and volunteers of this organisation are responsible for promoting the safety and well-being of children and young people by:

- Ensuring the safety and welfare of the child or young person is paramount at all times,
- Treating all children and young people with dignity, equality and respect,
- Adhering to this organisation's child safe policy and procedure at all times,
- Listening and responding appropriately to the views and concerns of children and young people within the organisation,
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people within the organisation,
- Ensuring children and young people understand their rights and explaining to the child in age-appropriate language what they can expect when participating in a service, activity or program offered by the organisation,
- Responding quickly, fairly and transparently to any serious complaints made by a child, young person or their parent/guardian,
- Notifying the Child Protection Helpline on 13 21 11 as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable suspicion that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected.  
<https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/view-contact?contact=604960>.

Employees/volunteers will not:

- Take part in any unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person.
- Discriminate against any child or young person because of age, gender, cultural background, religion, vulnerability or sexuality.
- Develop any 'special' relationships with children or young people outside of the professional relationship.