

Child and young person residential placement policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure children and young people accessing Access4u (we, our, us) for residential placement to have a safe, nurturing, stable and secure environment.

Scope

Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all employees involved in the placement of or supports for children and young people in our residential services.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Child and young person safe environments policy and Code of Conduct.

Responsibilities and delegations

This policy applies to	Governing Body. Staff and Volunteers
Specific responsibilities	The Board – Responsible for ensuring effective governance mechanisms are in place. The CEO and Managers – Responsible for monitoring and ensuring adherence to Policy and related procedures. Ensure due diligence and take reasonable steps to ensure Access4u are meeting their obligations. Ensure objectives of the policy are achieved. Staff – Responsible for adherence to this and related policies, procedures and forms that support this policy.
Policy approval	CEO

Policy context – this policy relates to:

Standards	• Family and Community Services Act 1972 • National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguarding Framework • National Standards for Out-of-Home care (NOOHCS) • The Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People - Charter of Rights
Legislation	• Children and Young People (Safety) (Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2017 • Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 • Children's Protection Law Reform (Transitional Arrangements and Related Amendments) Act 2017 • Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992 • National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018 • National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 • National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

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	• The Disability Act 2006 • The Disability Services Act SA 1993
Contractual obligations	• Government of SA, DCP Contract Management Framework • NDIS Code of Conduct
Organisation policies and procedures	• Child and Young Person safe environments policy • Code of conduct • Staff to customer ratios procedure • Worker clearance policy and procedure • Family contact and reunification policy • Family involvement in supports procedure • Person centred care policy • Diversity and Cultural inclusion policy • Incident management policy • Incident, hazard and near miss management procedure • Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) procedure • Competency and capability framework • Learning and development procedure • Incidents of a critical and/or distressing nature procedure • Staff Disciplinary policy and procedure • Employee assistance procedure • Employee exit procedure • Customer Transition or Exit from the Service procedure • Transition to independent living policy • Information sharing guideline • Filing and records management policy • Privacy policy • Open disclosure procedure • Staff supervision policy and procedure

Policy Statement

Residential care is provided to a child or young person in a residential premises (not their family home) by support workers where a family-based placement is not suitable.

In many cases children and young people are placed in residential care when they are under a care and protection order by the Guardianship of the Chief Executive of Department for Child Protection (DCP).

Some children and young people may also be placed in voluntary out of home care (VOHC). Voluntary out-of-home care is where there is no court order requiring a child to live out of their family care. The parent consents to a voluntary arrangement with a service for the temporary care of their child with the involvement of Department of Human Services (DHS) under Exceptional Needs Unit (ENU).

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We are committed to ensuring the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) children and young people in our care. We implement and apply in our practice the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle¹² and placement priorities for CALD children and young people³.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle is based on the presumptions that removal of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child or young person from their family should be an intervention of last resort, and that reunification of the child that has been removed is a high priority.

<i>Prevention</i>	Protecting children's rights to grow up in family, community and culture
<i>Partnership</i>	Ensuring the participation of community representatives in service design, delivery and individual case decisions
<i>Placement</i>	Placing children in out of home care in accordance with the placement hierarchy 1. a member of the child or young person's family 2. a member of the child or young person's community who has a relationship of responsibility for the child or young person 3. a member of the child or young person's community 4. a person of aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background (as the case requires). Where a child or young person is unable to be placed with family, they should be given opportunity for continuing contact with their family, communities or culture.
<i>Participation</i>	Ensuring the participation of children, parents and family members in decisions regarding care and protection.
<i>Connection</i>	Maintaining and supporting connections to family, community, culture and country for children in out of home care.

Placement priorities for CALD children and young people

Given the importance of CALD children and young people in care being provided the opportunity to develop and strengthen a sense of cultural and ethnic identity, every attempt to identify suitable placement options for CALD children and young people are made in the following order:

1. a member of the child or young person's family
2. a member of the child or young person's cultural, ethnic, language and religious community, considering issues such as caste, tribal groups, province, and ethnic disparity
3. a member of the child or young person's religious community*
4. a member of the child or young person's country or ethnic origin; or

¹ <https://www.snaicc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/02571.pdf>

² <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/support-and-guidance/service-providers/service-provision-requirements/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-requirements>

³ <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/support-and-guidance/service-providers/service-provision-requirements/cald-requirements>

5. a suitable family-based carer of any cultural background, who is willing to support a child or young person's connection to culture.

*this may not apply to all cultural groups.

Implementation

The primary guiding principle for children and young people accessing our residential services is that all decisions about placement and referral are made with the child or young person's safety, well-being and development in mind.

Our residential services are developed and implemented to

- Create a secure and stable environment
- Ensure the safety of children and young people in our care
- Provide nurturing care
- Provide developmental opportunities
- Provide relational healing opportunities
- Support educational, recreational and inclusive community-based activities
- Provide opportunities for children and young people to develop independent living skills
- Include the children and young people in household decisions

Admission criteria

We accept children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years with a disability diagnosis for long term residential services.

Children and young people will only be accepted into our residential services where there is capacity for them to have their own room and adequate personal space. Generally, we will only have a maximum of 2 children and young people in a home, assessed on a case-by-case situation.

Exceptions may be made to the admission criteria where this is approved by our Chief Executive Officer (CEO). This may include exceptions to support sibling groups to remain together.

Referral to residential placement

Referrals for our child and young person residential placements for children and young people under the Guardianship of the Chief Executive are made by DCP.

Referrals for VOHC customers are made by ENU referral to Access4u or Specialised Support Coordinator/Support Coordinator referrals through Access4u intake process.

Our Senior Manager Children's Services will advise DCP or ENU of our placement capacity and availability for the approved number of placements.

Placement

Prior to placement we will:

- Review the child or young person's profile (including any siblings if this is a sibling group placement) to ensure they meet the admission criteria and are appropriately matched to our organisation and the skill set of our employees (this includes but is not limited to reviewing Positive Behaviour Support plans, Allied Health reports, DCP Placement Requests).
 - The initial review process must include Leadership Team with final endorsement approved by our CEO.
- Support DCP or ENU to match children and young people to appropriate placements to enable timely decision-making and permanency planning (where appropriate).
- Support DCP or ENU to place sibling groups together (where appropriate) and/or ensure that connections between siblings are supported. Refer to our Family contact and reunification policy and Family involvement in supports policy.
- Confirm with DCP or ENU about the child or young person's family contact arrangements. Refer to our Family contact and reunification policy and Family involvement in supports policy.
- Communicate with the child or young person's DCP case worker, ENU, medical or allied health professionals and/or family (where appropriate) before initiating placement to ensure all required and relevant information is considered.
- Consider the views of children and young people in decision-making processes (where possible) and refer back to the DCP or ENU case manager or guardian as appropriate.
- Ensure we have a suitably qualified and trained support team available to effectively support the child or young person and meet their support needs, taking into account the age and developmental level of the child or young person and their cultural needs.
 - We recruit, select, support and train employees in accordance with the DCP's Carer and Personnel Requirements⁴.
 - Rosters will be in place to support the needs of the child or young person. This will include combinations of active and passive shifts, on-call arrangements, emergency support arrangements (such as when the child or young person is unable to attend school due to illness), and during holiday periods.
- Develop a quote for service provision based on the information available which may include assessments of the needs of the young person and any reported behaviours of concern (BoC). Assessments and any historic information used is accessed with the approval of DCP.
- Ensure the residential home meets all safety requirements and has been personalised to meet the child or young person's individual preferences (where appropriate).

⁴ <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/support-and-guidance/service-providers/service-provision-requirements/carers-and-personnel-requirements>

Organisational requirements

All residential homes where children and young people are under Guardianship of Executive (DCP) must have a current children's residential facility (CRF) licence and will comply with DCP's Service Provision Requirements⁵ at all times. These service provision requirements will be reflected in our supports for children and young people in VOHC.

We have effective governance and management structures to support quality service provision and ensure that the needs of children and young people are met. We maintain appropriate policies, procedures, service models, staffing models, rostering arrangements, programming and housing in line with DCP Licensing requirements and NDIS requirements.

We ensure ongoing review with the child or young person's DCP case worker, other relevant agencies and/or family (where appropriate) to discuss progress towards their documented life domains and goals. We are actively involved in meetings and case conferences relating to the child or young person.

Our residential services and programs are developed on a model based on an evidence and trauma-informed therapeutic framework.

All children and young people have access to medical and allied health professionals. This includes for routine appointments, therapeutic sessions, or emergency requirements.

We coordinate residential services and supports with other relevant services and supports. This includes (but is not limited to) educational, recreational and community-based activities, and provide opportunities for children and young people to develop independent living skills.

Where relevant, we apply the service provision requirements as documented in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle and placement priorities for CALD children and young people.

We will ensure where there are indicators that a residential placement may be disrupted, we will work with DCP, ENU and other relevant agencies and/or family (where appropriate) to stabilise and secure the placement. Where a placement change is required, we will maintain responsibility for the child or young person until suitable, alternative placement is found. We will work with DCP, ENU and other relevant agencies and/or family (where appropriate) and the new service provider to ensure a supportive and effective customer centred transition from our services. Refer to our Continuity of support procedure for more information.

Employees supporting children and young people in residential services

We will ensure our employees supporting children and young people in residential services

- are suitably matched to effectively support the child or young person and comply with our Code of conduct at all times.
- hold and maintain relevant employment screening at all times. Refer to our Employment screening policy and procedure.
- support the child or young person with family contact as directed by DCP, including before and after contact with family. Refer to our Family contact and reunification policy.
- support the child or young person to actively participate in educational, recreational, cultural and

⁵ <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/support-and-guidance/service-providers/service-provision-requirements>

community-based activities, and providing opportunities for children and young people to develop independent living skills. Refer to our Person centred care policy and Cultural diversity and social inclusion policy.

- are provided routine supervision and guidance regarding their performance and have the opportunity to raise any concerns or issues. Refer to our Staff supervision policy and procedure.
- document any incidents in our incident management systems and report to external agencies as required. Refer to our Incident management policy and Incident, hazard and near miss management procedure.
- report to the Child Abuse Report Line where the child or young person has experienced harm or is at risk of harm. Refer to our Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) procedure.
- obtain required qualifications for their role. Refer to our Competency and capability framework.
- maintain required mandatory and organisational training requirements. Refer to our Learning and development procedure and Internal training requirements guidance.
- have access to relevant training to consolidate or improve knowledge, develop or build skills, promote wellbeing and to address identified issues as they arise. Refer to our Learning and development procedure.
- are provided support during and following critical incidents, care concerns and/or special investigations into allegations of abuse made against them. Refer to our Incidents of a critical and/or distressing nature procedure and Investigations and disciplinary management policy.
- have access to an independent, professional and confidential counselling service for any personal or work-related issues. Refer to our Employee assistance procedure.
- participate in performance review and professional development processes. Refer to our Professional development and performance review procedure.
- have the opportunity to participate in an exit interview when leaving our organisation. Refer to our Employee exit procedure.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in residential services

In addition to all requirements listed above, where we are supporting an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child or young person we will act in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. We understand and will uphold the 5 core elements of this principle: prevention, partnership, placement, participation and connection.

Our employees will obtain a working knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal cultures, identities, values, belief and customs by attending training and forums that promote awareness of Aboriginal histories, and culturally safe and responsive practice. This includes providing information and training on culturally appropriate caring, to ensure the child or young person's cultural values, beliefs and practices are respected and upheld.

We will involve the child or young person, their family and their community in decisions and, where necessary, use appropriate Aboriginal interpreters in communication with these stakeholders.

We will seek guidance regarding service development and delivery from Aboriginal organisations, leaders, Elders, mentors, advisors and communities.

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We will work alongside Aboriginal children and young people and their families to explore cultural connections and identify the child or young person's community, Country and language group.

We will develop relationships with Aboriginal organisations and relevant Aboriginal communities as soon as an Aboriginal child or young person is placed in our care, or as soon as we become aware of the child or young person's Aboriginal identity.

We will ensure when a child is placed in our care that the support team are informed of specific aspects of the child or young person's Aboriginal identity, including community, Country and language group.

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) children and young people in residential services

In addition to all requirements listed above, where we are supporting a CALD child or young person we will act in accordance with the DCP Placement priorities for CALD children and young people.

We will be sensitive to the linguistic, cultural and religious diversity of the child or young person and will acknowledge the importance of these factors in planning and delivery culturally competent services.

We will involve relevant members of the child or young person's community and extended family as appropriate and use interpreters in communication with the child and family.

We will develop links with culturally appropriate services as soon as the child or young person is placed in our care, or as soon as we become aware of the child or young person's linguistic, cultural or religious identity.

Our employees will receive information or training on culturally sensitive caring, to ensure the child or young person's cultural values, beliefs and practices are respected and upheld.

We will ensure the child or young person's support team are informed of specific aspects of the child or young person's culture or religious identity, such as dietary laws, religious customs and beliefs and religious requirements, such as appropriate dress and behaviour.

We will obtain a working knowledge and understanding of the child or young person's cultural affiliations, identities, values, beliefs and customs by attending training and forums that promote awareness of cultural and cross-cultural issues and culturally competent practice.

We will seek guidance regarding service development and delivery from community members, mentors, advisors and recognised Elders from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Placement disruption and exit from services

Where there are indicators that a placement may be disrupted, we will work with the DCP or ENU case manager to implement strategies to stabilise and secure the existing placement.

Where we identify a placement change is required, we will notify the DCP or ENU case manager in a timely manner. We will ensure continuity of services and maintain responsibility of the child or young person until an alternative placement is found.

Where DCP or ENU identify a placement change is required, such as reunification, alternative service or transfer to independent living, we will be notified in a timely manner to ensure a successful transition.

Where a placement change occurs, we will work cooperatively with the DCP or ENU case manager, the child or young person, their family and all other parties concerned, in order to ensure a smooth transition. We will ensure

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any change is sensitive to the needs of the child or young person, ensuring they are involved in the process wherever possible.

Refer to our customer transition or Exit from services procedure and Transition to independent living policy for more information on customers exiting our services.

Information and records management

Information and records pertaining to the child or young person while in our care are managed in line with our Information and records management procedure.

Any information or records being shared with others must meet the requirements outlined in our Privacy policy and Information sharing guidelines procedure.

Refer to our Customer Transition or Exit from the Service procedure for more information on information and records management for customer's exiting from our services.

Notifications

Refer to our Incident management policy for information regarding incidents that are reportable, significant or notifiable, and are required to be reported to other agencies.

Our Open disclosure procedure supports open and timely communication with our customers and their family or guardian (including DCP or ENU case manager where relevant) following an adverse event, no-harm incidents, or near misses.