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**Policy and Procedure - Child Safety and Duty of Care**

**GenYZ Mentoring**

**Child Safety**

**Purpose**

## We are committed to protecting children and young people matched in our program’s mentoring relationships and are opposed to any form of abuse. We strongly support child protection and abuse prevention.

## The intention of this policy is to provide a framework that ensures that GenYZ does everything it can to educate program staff about child safety, to select and train appropriate mentors and to protect the young people in our care while part of the program.

**Policy**

## Our policy applies to all young people up to 18 years participating in the program and to program staff, mentors, parents and any partner organisations.

## GenYZ will:

* promote child safety in our policy, procedures and practices
* comply with Victorian child protection legislation that makes clear that anyone can contact child protection authorities if they have reasonable grounds to believe a child has been harmed or is likely to be harmed or is in need of protection
* require all program staff and mentors to have a Working with Children Check and a National Police Check
* designate a program staff member as the person to receive and report any complaint or allegation about child safety made by program staff, mentors, young people, parents, visitors or others involved in the program
* provide a clear, transparent and fair reporting process that creates a sense of trust and confidence in the process, and encourage everyone to use the process if they have a concern for a child or young person’s safety or well-being.

**Procedures**

GenYZ will undertake the following process to protect young people in the program:

1. Clearly define what it means by abuse
2. Undertake a risk analysis to identify risk factors within the program and its activities and develop strategies to minimise their likelihood
3. Recruit, screen and select staff and mentors to ensure they are safe and suitable to work with young people, taking into account how interviews are conducted, reference checks and Police and Working With Children checks
4. Educate all staff and mentors about this policy, our reporting process and the program’s Code of Conduct
5. Provide ongoing support and supervision that gives staff and mentors the confidence to report any safety concerns about young people they associate with
6. Provide ongoing training in the areas of child abuse and child protection for staff and mentors
7. Consult with young people in the program regularly as part of creating a child-safe environment and use their feedback to review this policy
8. Specify how often this policy is reviewed and the ongoing monitoring process, ensuring any changes in Victorian child protection legislation be reflected in this policy.

**Mandatory Reporting Procedure**

GenYZ is informed by the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (as amended 2005). The following procedure has been developed to enhance and protect the wellbeing and safety of young people involved with the program.

If a young person discloses physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect to you:

1. Listen, ask questions for clarity but do not investigate
2. Do not promise that the information will be kept confidential and explain to the young person who you will be telling and why
3. Immediately report to your GenYZ staff contact, or in cases where your contact is unavailable, on days they don’t work or after business hours, follow GenYZ’s *(2g) Critical Incidents Procedure*
4. GenYZ staff will make an assessment as to what action needs to be taken,   
   i.e. whether a referral needs to be made to Child Protection at the Department of Human Services and/or the police. Key themes to consider are the nature of the disclosure and how long ago it happened, as well as whether the young person is currently at risk.

**Duty of Care**

**Policy**

All parties participating in GenYZ have the responsibility to exercise ***duty of care***. That is, they must take reasonable care to avoid an act (or failure to act) which might reasonably be foreseen to result in injury to others.

Legal liability arises where, in the eyes of the court, an organisation or individual has been negligent. In short, GenYZ is liable for the actions of both staff and mentors.

Mentors are expected to take steps to avoid reasonably foreseeable risks of injury. The aim should always be to minimise the risk of injury and the avoidance of legal action.

GenYZ is committed to good risk management practices, appropriate insurance, parental consent and common sense. Mentors must adhere to program guidelines and its Code of Conduct, and be clear about the nature of the mentoring role.