

mtime

Child Protection Risk Management Strategy: Information for Families

2020

mtime's child and youth risk management strategy

Creating safe and supportive service environments for children and young people is everyone's business. mtime is committed to providing the highest standard of service to children and young people and ensuring they are kept safe from harm.

In a safe and supportive environment, services and activities are provided so children and young people:

- Feel safe and protected from harm.
- Help plan activities and make decisions.
- Are consulted and respected.
- Have their best interests considered and upheld.

mtime is required to have a written child and youth risk management strategy to protect the children and young people placed in the care of our Moncierges from harm. The strategy will help ensure we are able to provide a safe and supportive service environment for children and young people, by identifying and minimising risks. Screening employees and Moncierges through the Working With Children Check system is part of this strategy.

The child and youth risk management strategy addresses the following elements:

- A statement of commitment.
- A code of conduct for interacting with children and young people.
- Procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing Moncierges and other employees.
- Policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines.
- A plan for managing breaches of the child and youth risk management strategy.
- Policies and procedures for implementing and reviewing the child and youth risk management strategy and maintaining an employee register for Working with Children checks.
- Risk management plans for high-risk activities and special events.
- Strategies for communication and support.

As a parent/carer, it is important for you to understand the policies and procedures that form the child and youth risk management strategy. A copy of the strategy is attached for your information and comment.

Beliefs

Our company believes:

- That children are capable of the same range of emotions as adults are.

- That children's emotions are real and need to be accepted by adults.
- That a response given to a child from an adult in a child's early stages of emotional development can be hugely positive or detrimental depending on the adult's reaction.
- That children are very in touch with their bodies reactions to their emotions.
- That children who retain, enhance and better understand their body's response to an emotion are more able to foresee the outcome out of a situation and avoid them or ask for help.

Review

The policy will be reviewed annually. The review will be conducted by:

- Management
- Employees
- Families
- Interested Parties

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Introduction

m-Time Pty Ltd (mtime) takes our responsibility to provide a safe and caring environment for all children seriously. We believe that the safety of children is paramount at all times and we aim to protect a child's right to be safe from abuse of any kind. mtime also aims to defend the rights of our Moncierges to confidentiality if a complaint against them is made and is found to be unsubstantiated. mtime will ensure that all parties affected by this policy are made aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection. mtime aims to educate all parties about their roles in child protection and also about signs of abuse and ensure that all requirements of child protection requirements are being met.

Who is affected by this policy?

Moncierges Families (clients) mtime Employees

Purpose of this Policy

This Child Protection Policy ("policy") aims to assist mtime Pty Ltd ("our", "us" or "we") to uphold its core values and create a safe, fair and inclusive environment for everyone associated with our services. It sets out our commitment to ensure that every person bound by the policy is treated with respect and dignity and protected from discrimination, harassment and abuse. It also seeks to ensure that everyone involved in our services is aware of their key legal and ethical rights and responsibilities, as well as the standards of behaviour expected of them.

The attachments to this policy describe the practical steps we will take to eliminate discrimination, harassment, child abuse and other forms of inappropriate behaviour from our services. As part of this commitment, the policy allows m-Time Pty Ltd to take disciplinary action against any person or company bound by this policy if they breach the policy. The policy starts on February 15th 2017 and will operate until replaced.

Company responsibilities

m-Time Pty Ltd must:

1. adopt, implement and comply with this policy;
2. ensure that this policy is enforceable;
3. publish, distribute and promote this policy and the consequences of any
4. breaches of the policy;
5. promote and model appropriate standards of behaviour at all times;
6. deal with any complaints made under this policy in an appropriate manner;
7. deal with any breaches of this policy in an appropriate manner;
8. recognise and enforce any penalty imposed under this policy;

9. ensure that a copy of this policy is available or accessible to all people and companies to whom this policy applies;
10. use appropriately trained people to receive and manage complaints and
11. allegations of inappropriate behavior;
12. monitor and review this policy at least annually.

Individual responsibilities

1. Individuals bound by this policy must:
2. make themselves aware of the contents of this policy;
3. comply with all relevant provisions of the policy, including any codes of
4. conduct and the steps for making a complaint or reporting possible child abuse set out in this policy;
5. consent to the screening requirements set out in this policy, and any
6. state/territory Working with Children Checks if the person holds or applies for a role that involves regular unsupervised contact with a child or young person under the age of 18 or where otherwise required by law;
7. place the safety and welfare of children above other considerations;
8. be accountable for their behaviour: and,
9. comply with any decisions and/or disciplinary measures imposed under this
10. policy.

Position statements

Child protection

m-Time Pty Ltd is committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people. We support the rights of the child and will act at all times to ensure that a child-safe environment is maintained.

We acknowledge the valuable contribution made by our Moncierges and encourage their active participation in providing a safe, fair and inclusive environment for all participants.

Identify and analyse risk of harm

We will develop and implement a risk management strategy, including a review of our existing child protection practices, to determine how child-safe our company is and to identify any additional steps we can take to minimise and prevent the risk of harm to children because of the actions of a Moncierge, mtime employee or another person.

Develop codes of behaviour

We will develop and promote a code of behaviour that sets out the conduct we expect of adults when they deal and interact with children, especially those in our care.

These codes will clearly describe professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and unacceptable behavior.

Choose suitable employees and Moncierges

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that our company engages suitable and appropriate people to work with children, especially those in positions that involve regular unsupervised contact with children. This will include using a range of screening measures.

We will ensure that Working with Children Checks are conducted for all employees and moncierges that work with children.

Support, train, supervise and enhance performance

We will ensure that all our employees and Moncierges who work with children have ongoing support and training. Our goal is to develop their skills and capacity and to enhance their performance so we can maintain a child-safe environment.

Report and respond appropriately to suspected abuse and neglect

We will ensure that all our employees and moncierges are able to identify and respond appropriately to children at risk of harm and that they are aware of their responsibilities under state laws to make a report if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected.

Further, if any person believes that another person bound by this policy is acting inappropriately towards a child, or is in breach of this policy, he or she may make an internal complaint to us.

Taking images of children

There is a risk that Images of children may be used inappropriately or illegally. m-Time Pty Ltd requires that individuals, Moncierges and employees wherever possible, obtain permission from a child's parent/guardian before taking an image of a child that is not their own. They should also make sure the parent/guardian understands how the image will be used.

When using a photo of a child, we will not name or identify the child or publish personal information, such as residential address, email address or telephone number, without the consent of the child's parent/guardian. We will not provide information about a child's hobbies, interests, school or the like, as this can be used by pedophiles or other persons to "groom" a child.

Anti-discrimination and harassment

m-Time Pty Ltd is committed to providing an environment in which people are treated fairly and equitably and that is, as far as practicable, free from all forms of discrimination and harassment.

We recognise that people may not be able to enjoy themselves or perform at their best at work if they are treated unfairly, discriminated against or harassed.

Discrimination

Unlawful discrimination involves the less favourable treatment of a person on the basis of one or more of the personal characteristics protected by state or federal anti-discrimination laws.

The personal characteristics protected by anti-discrimination laws include attributes such as race, age, disability, gender and race.

Discrimination can be either direct or indirect.

- Direct discrimination occurs if a person treats, or proposes to treat, a person with a protected personal characteristic unfavourably because of that personal characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination occurs if a person imposes, or proposes to impose, a requirement, condition or practice that will disadvantage a person with a protected personal characteristic and that requirement, condition or practice is not reasonable.

For the purposes of determining discrimination, the offender's awareness and motive are irrelevant.

Harassment

Harassment is any unwelcome conduct, verbal or physical, that intimidates, offends or humiliates another person and which happens because a person has a certain personal characteristic protected by State or Federal anti-discrimination legislation.

The offensive behaviour does not have to take place a number of times, a single incident can constitute harassment.

Sexual harassment is one type of harassment. Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct, remarks or innuendo of a sexual nature. It covers a wide range of behaviours and can be verbal, written, visual or physical. Sexual harassment is not limited to members of the opposite sex.

Prohibition against discrimination and harassment

We prohibit all forms of harassment and discrimination based on the personal characteristics. Any person who believes they are being, or have been, harassed or discriminated against by another person bound by this policy is encouraged to raise their concerns with us.

Child Protection Risk Management Strategy

Concerns of Abuse / Neglect Definition of Abuse / Neglect

"Abuse or neglect" means –

(a) sexual abuse; or

(b) physical or emotional injury or other abuse, or neglect, to the extent that:

(i) the injured, abused or neglected person has suffered, or is likely to suffer, physical or psychological harm detrimental to the person's wellbeing; or

(ii) the injured, abused or neglected person's physical or psychological development is in jeopardy.

Suspicion of harm

You can suspect harm if you are concerned by significant changes in behaviour or the presence of new unexplained and suspicious injuries.

Disclosure of harm

A disclosure of harm occurs when someone, including a child, tells you about harm that has happened or is likely to happen.

Disclosures of harm may start with:

- "I think I saw..."
- "Somebody told me that..."
- "Just think you should know..."
- "I'm not sure what I want you to do, but..."

Procedures for receiving a disclosure of harm

When receiving a disclosure of harm:

- Remain calm and find a private place to talk.
- Don't promise that you'll keep a secret; tell them they have done the right thing in telling you but that you'll need to tell someone who can help keep them safe.
- Only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report the matter; probing questions could cause distress, confusion and interfere with any later enquiries.
- Do not attempt to conduct your own investigation or mediate an outcome between the parties involved.

Reporting guidelines for disclosures or suspicions of harm

Following are the actions our organisation will take immediately following a disclosure or suspicion of harm:

Documenting a suspicion of harm

If you or others have concerns about the safety of a child, record your concerns in a nonjudgmental and accurate manner as soon as possible. If a parent explains a noticeable mark on a child, record your own observations as well as accurate details of the conversation. If you see unsafe or harmful actions towards a child in your care, intervene immediately, provided it is safe to do so. If it is unsafe, call the police for assistance.

Documenting a disclosure of harm

Record the details as soon as possible so that they are accurately captured. Include:

- Time, date and place of the disclosure
- 'Word for word' what happened and what was said, including anything you said and any actions that have been taken.
- Date of report and signature.
- If you need to take notes as the person is telling you, explain that you are taking a record in case any later enquiry occurs.

Reporting the disclosure or suspicion of harm to authorities m-Time Pty Ltd will not conduct its own enquiries in relation to the disclosure or suspicion of harm or try to come to an agreement between the parties involved. The person who receives a disclosure or suspects harm is to contact the relevant authority to ensure information provided is comprehensive and accurate.

Report the matter to:

DHS – CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES 1300 737 639
CALL 000 FOR EMERGENCIES

Our service recognises the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 which states the following: A mandatory reporter who forms the belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection must report to the Secretary that belief and the reasonable grounds for it as soon as practicable:

- (a) after forming the belief, and;
- (b) after each occasion on which he or she becomes aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.

A belief is a belief on reasonable grounds if a reasonable person practising the profession or carrying out the duties of the office, position or employment, as the case requires, would have formed the belief on those grounds.

Actions following a disclosure of harm

Support and counselling will be offered to all parties involved.

Procedures to minimise harm to children and young people

Our company works to minimise harm to children and young people by acting in a manner that supports their interests and wellbeing, by:

- Making sure that children know that it is their right to feel safe at all times.
- Teaching them about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in general.
- Letting them know who is and who is not an employee in the organisation.
- Allowing them to be a part of decision-making processes.
- Making sure they are safe by monitoring their activities and ensuring their environment meets all safety requirements.
- Taking anything a child or young person says seriously and following up their concerns.
- Letting them know there is no secret too awful, no story too terrible, that they can't share with someone they trust.
- Teaching them about appropriate and inappropriate contact in a manner appropriate to their age and level of understanding.
- Teaching children and young people to say 'no' to anything that makes them feel unsafe.
- Encouraging them to tell Moncierges of any suspicious activities or people.
- Listening to children and young people and letting them know that educators are available for them if they have any concerns.

When receiving a disclosure of harm:

- Remain calm and find a private place to talk.
- Don't promise that you'll keep a secret; tell them they have done the right thing in telling you but that you'll need to tell someone who can help keep them safe.
- Only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report the matter; probing questions could cause distress, confusion and interfere with any later enquiries.
- Do not attempt to conduct your own investigation or mediate an outcome between the parties involved.

How can abuse and neglect be recognised?

Behavioural or physical signs which assist in recognising child abuse are known as indicators. A single indicator can be as important an indicator as the presence of several indicators. A child's behaviour is likely to be affected if he/she is under stress. There can be many causes of stress, including child abuse, and it is important to find out specifically what is causing the stress.

General indicators of abuse and neglect

Marked delay between injury and seeking medical assistance.

- History of injury.
- The child gives some indication that the injury did not occur as stated.
- The child tells you someone hurt him/her.
- The child tells you about someone he/she knows who has been hurt.
- Someone (relative, friend, acquaintance, sibling) tells you that the child may have been abused.

Physical Abuse

- Physical indicators include:
- Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts, welts.
- Bruising or marks that may show the shape of an object.
- Fractured bones, especially in an infant where a fracture is unlikely to occur accidentally.
- Poisoning.
- Internal injuries.
- Explanations are not consistent with the injury.

Possible behavioural indicators include:

- Showing wariness or distrust of adults.
- Wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injury).
- Demonstrating fear of parents and of going home.
- Becoming fearful when other children cry or shout.
- Being excessively friendly to strangers.
- Being very passive and compliant.

Indicators of physical abuse in parents and caregivers include:

- Direct admissions from parents about fear of hurting their children.
- Family history of violence.
- History of their own maltreatment as a child.
- Repeated visits for medical assistance.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is not usually identified through physical indicators. Often the first sign is when a child tells someone they trust that they have been sexually abused.

However the presence of sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, or vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge may indicate sexual abuse.

One or more of these behavioural and physical indicators may be present:

- Child telling someone that sexual abuse has occurred.
- Complaining of headaches or stomach pains.
- Experiencing problems with schoolwork.
- Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge which is unusual for the child's age.
- Showing behaviour such as frequent rocking, sucking and biting.
- Experiencing difficulties in sleeping.
- Having difficulties in relating to adults and peers.
- Self-destructive behaviour.
- Regression in development achievements.
- Child being in contact with a suspected or known perpetrator of sexual assault.
- Bleeding from the vagina or anus.
- Injuries such as tears to the genitalia.

Indicators of sexual abuse in parents, caregivers or anyone else associated with the child:

- Exposing the child to sexual behaviours of others.
- Suspected or charged with child sexual abuse.
- Inappropriate jealousy regarding age appropriate development of independence from the family.

- Coercing the child to engage in sexual behaviour with other children.
- Verbal threats of sexual abuse.
- Exposing the child to pornography.

Emotional Abuse

There are few physical indicators, although emotional abuse may cause delays in emotional, mental, or even physical development.

Possible behavioural indicators include:

- Displaying low self-esteem.
- Tending to be withdrawn, passive, tearful.
- Inability to value others.
- Lack of trust in people and expectations.
- Displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour.
- Being highly anxious.
- Showing delayed speech.
- Acting like a much younger child (e.g. soiling or wetting pants).
- Difficulties in relating to adults and peers.

Indicators of emotional abuse in parents and caregivers:

- Constant criticism, belittling, teasing of a child or ignoring or withholding praise and affection
- Excessive or unreasonable demands
- Persistent hostility, severe verbal abuse, rejection and scape-goating
- Belief that a particular child is bad or 'evil'
- Using inappropriate physical or social isolation as punishment
- Exposure to domestic violence Neglect

Physical indicators include:

- Frequent hunger
- Malnutrition
- Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing (e.g. summer clothes in winter)
- Left unsupervised for long periods
- Medical needs not attended to
- Abandoned by parents

Possible behavioural indicators include:

- Stealing food
- Often being tired, falling asleep
- Abusing alcohol or drugs
- Displaying aggressive behaviour
- Not getting on well with peers
- Extreme longing for adult affection
- Acute separation anxiety
- Self-comforting behaviours (e.g. rocking, sucking)
- Delay in developmental milestones
- Untreated physical problems

Indicators of neglect in parents and caregivers:

- Failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, medical attention, hygiene or leaving the child inappropriately without supervision
- Inability to respond emotionally to the child
- Child abandonment
- Depriving or withholding physical contact
- Failure to provide psychological nurturing
- Treating one child differently to others

The presence of indicators such as those described may alert us to the possibility that a child is being abused. It is important that anyone who has concerns that a child or young person is in need of protection contacts a local Child Protection Service for assistance and advice.

Child Protection Risk Management Strategy: Managing Breaches

This plan outlines the steps to be taken following a breach of the child and youth risk management strategy in order to address the breach in a fair and supportive manner.

Definition: A breach is any action or inaction by any member of the organisation, including children and young people, that fails to comply with any part of the strategy.

This includes any breach in relation to:

- Statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm.
- Code of conduct for interacting with children and young people.
- Procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing paid employees and volunteers.
- Policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines.
- Policies and procedures for implementing and reviewing the children and youth risk management strategy and maintaining an employee register.
- Risk management plans for high risk activities and special events.
- Strategies for communication and support.

All stakeholders are to be made aware of the actions or inactions that form a breach as well as the potential outcomes of breaching the child and youth risk management strategy.

Processes to manage a breach of the child and youth risk management strategy Breaches will be managed in a fair, unbiased and supportive manner. The following will occur:

- All people concerned will be advised of the process.
- All people concerned will be able to provide their version of events.
- The details of the breach, including the versions of all parties and the outcome will be recorded.
- Matters discussed in relation to the breach will be kept confidential and an appropriate outcome will be decided.

Suitable outcomes for breaches

Depending on the nature of the breach, outcomes may include:

- Emphasising the relevant component of the child and youth risk management strategy, for example, the code of conduct.
- Providing closer supervision.
- Further education and training.
- Mediating between those involved in the incident (where appropriate).
- Disciplinary procedures if necessary.
- Reviewing current policies and procedures and developing new policies and procedures if necessary.

Child Protection Risk Management Strategy Template: Risk Management Plan for High Risk Activity

In addition to occupational health and safety concerns, a child and youth risk management strategy should analyse the risk of 'harm' to children and young people (cont. next page):

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6
Describe the activity Identify all elements of the event from beginning to end	Identify Risks Something that could happen that results in harm to a child or young person	Analyse the Risk (Likelihood/Consequence)	Evaluate the Risk The level of risk	Manage the Risk Assess the options	Review Nominate who will review after the event/activity

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The policy will be reviewed annually.

The review will be conducted by:

- Management
- Employees
- Families
- Interested Parties

Last reviewed: February 2019

Date for next review: February 2018