

Work Health and Safety (WHS) Policy

Introduction

Beanies Family Support, located in the Huon Valley, Tasmania, is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all employees, volunteers, clients, and visitors. Our services, including child and young person advocacy, NDIS application support, NDIS support coordination, youth coaching, early intervention support, early childhood service consulting, counselling, and community event support, require stringent health and safety standards to ensure consistency and quality in service delivery.

Purpose

The purpose of this Work Health and Safety (WHS) Policy is to:

- Define the standards for health and safety across all our services.
- Ensure a consistent approach to maintaining a safe work environment.
- Outline the responsibilities and expectations of staff, volunteers, and contractors regarding health and safety.
- Establish procedures for identifying, assessing, and managing health and safety risks.

Scope

This policy applies to all Beanies Family Support staff, volunteers, contractors, clients, and visitors involved in the delivery of services.

WHS Standards

1. Legal Compliance

Regulatory Compliance: Beanies Family Support is committed to complying with all relevant WHS legislation, regulations, and codes of practice. This involves staying current with changes in the law and ensuring that our policies and practices reflect these updates.

Compliance is not only a legal obligation but a foundational aspect of our commitment to safety and health in the workplace. Regular training and updates will be provided to all staff to ensure they are aware of their legal responsibilities and the standards that must be met.

Continuous Monitoring: To ensure ongoing compliance and the effectiveness of our WHS practices, Beanies Family Support will implement a system of continuous monitoring. This involves regular reviews and updates of our WHS policies and procedures to align with current laws, industry best practices, and emerging safety issues. Continuous monitoring

helps us to identify potential hazards early and to make necessary adjustments promptly, ensuring a proactive approach to workplace health and safety.

2. Leadership and Commitment

Management Responsibility: At Beanies Family Support, we believe that strong leadership is essential for effective WHS management. Our management team is responsible for demonstrating a commitment to WHS by providing the necessary resources, including time, funding, and personnel, to support safety initiatives. Leaders will actively promote and participate in WHS activities, setting a positive example for all staff members. This leadership commitment ensures that WHS is a priority at all levels of the organisation.

WHS Culture: Promoting a positive WHS culture is integral to our mission. This involves fostering an environment where safety is valued and prioritised, encouraging open communication about safety concerns, and recognizing and rewarding safe behaviours. By embedding WHS into our organisational culture, we create a supportive atmosphere where all employees feel responsible for their own safety and that of their colleagues, clients, and visitors.

3. Risk Management

Hazard Identification: Regular hazard identification is a critical component of our risk management strategy. Beanies Family Support will conduct thorough inspections and assessments of all work environments, processes, and activities to identify potential hazards. This proactive approach allows us to address safety issues before they lead to incidents. Employees are encouraged to report any hazards they notice, ensuring that we have a comprehensive understanding of all potential risks.

Risk Assessment: Once hazards are identified, we will conduct detailed risk assessments to evaluate the likelihood and impact of these hazards. This process involves considering who might be harmed and how, evaluating existing control measures, and determining if additional actions are needed. Risk assessments help us prioritise safety efforts and allocate resources effectively to manage the most significant risks.

Risk Control: Implementing effective risk control measures is essential to minimise or eliminate identified risks. Beanies Family Support will use a hierarchy of controls approach, starting with the most effective measures, such as eliminating hazards or substituting safer alternatives. Where elimination is not possible, we will implement engineering controls, administrative controls, and personal protective equipment (PPE) to reduce risks to acceptable levels. Regular reviews of control measures will ensure their continued effectiveness.

4. Safe Work Practices

Procedures and Protocols: Developing and maintaining clear and comprehensive safe work procedures and protocols is essential to ensure the safety of all activities. These procedures provide detailed guidance on how to perform tasks safely, including the use of equipment, handling of materials, and emergency procedures. Beanies Family Support will regularly review and update these procedures to reflect best practices and any changes in operations.

Training and Education: Providing WHS training and education to all staff, volunteers, and contractors is crucial to ensuring they understand safe work practices and their responsibilities. Beanies Family Support will offer regular training sessions on various WHS topics, including hazard identification, risk assessment, emergency procedures, and the proper use of PPE. Ongoing education ensures that everyone remains informed about safety practices and can contribute to a safe work environment.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Where risks cannot be eliminated through other control measures, Beanies Family Support will ensure that appropriate PPE is provided and used. This includes items such as gloves, masks, safety glasses, and protective clothing. We will also provide training on the correct use, maintenance, and disposal of PPE to ensure it is effective in protecting our staff from workplace hazards.

5. Incident Management

Reporting: Establishing clear procedures for reporting WHS incidents, hazards, and near misses is essential for effective incident management. Beanies Family Support encourages all employees to report any safety concerns immediately. This prompt reporting allows us to investigate and address issues quickly, preventing further incidents. A transparent reporting system helps to create an open and trust-based safety culture.

Investigation: Conducting thorough investigations of WHS incidents is crucial to identify root causes and implement corrective actions. Beanies Family Support will follow a structured investigation process to understand what happened, why it happened, and how similar incidents can be prevented in the future. Lessons learned from investigations will be communicated to all staff to enhance our overall safety practices.

Emergency Response: Developing and maintaining emergency response plans is vital to ensure preparedness for potential emergencies. Beanies Family Support will have clear procedures in place for various emergency scenarios, such as fires, medical emergencies, and natural disasters. Regular drills and training will ensure that all staff are familiar with these procedures and can respond effectively to emergencies.

6. Health and Well-being

Supportive Environment: Beanies Family Support is committed to fostering a supportive work environment that promotes the physical and mental well-being of all employees. This includes creating a positive workplace culture, providing access to health and wellness resources, and encouraging work-life balance. We recognize that a healthy workforce is essential for delivering high-quality services and achieving our organisational goals.

Stress Management: Implementing strategies to manage work-related stress is a key component of our WHS policy. Beanies Family Support will provide training on stress management techniques, offer flexible work arrangements where possible, and promote a healthy work-life balance. We will also encourage open communication and provide support to employees experiencing stress or mental health issues.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP): Providing access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is an important resource for supporting the well-being of our staff. The EAP offers confidential counselling and support services to employees facing personal or work-related challenges. Beanies Family Support will ensure that all employees are aware of and have access to the EAP as part of our commitment to their health and well-being.

7. Consultation and Communication

Employee Involvement: Involving employees, volunteers, and contractors in WHS decision-making processes is essential for creating a safe work environment. Beanies Family Support will establish committees and working groups to encourage participation and gather input on WHS matters. This collaborative approach ensures that all voices are heard and that safety initiatives are well-informed and effective.

Communication: Ensuring effective communication of WHS information, policies, and procedures is critical for maintaining safety standards. Beanies Family Support will use various communication channels, such as meetings, newsletters, and digital platforms, to keep all staff informed about WHS updates and initiatives. Clear and consistent communication helps to reinforce the importance of safety and keeps everyone engaged in WHS efforts.

Feedback Mechanism: Establishing a system for receiving and addressing WHS feedback and concerns from staff and clients is vital for continuous improvement. Beanies Family Support will provide accessible and anonymous ways for employees to share their thoughts and report issues. Feedback will be reviewed regularly, and appropriate actions will be taken to address any concerns, ensuring that our WHS practices remain effective and responsive to the needs of our workforce.

Specific WHS Guidelines for Service Areas

1. Child and Young Person Advocacy

Safe Interaction: Ensuring safe interactions with children and young people is paramount in our advocacy services. Beanies Family Support will adhere to strict child protection policies and guidelines to prevent harm and ensure the well-being of the children we serve. This includes background checks for all staff, training on child protection, and clear protocols for reporting and responding to any concerns.

Travel Safety: Implementing safety measures for staff travelling to meet clients is essential to ensure their well-being. Beanies Family Support will provide guidelines on safe transportation methods, maintain communication protocols for staff travelling alone, and offer training on personal safety. This proactive approach helps to mitigate risks associated with travel and ensures that staff can perform their duties safely.

2. NDIS Application Support

Ergonomic Practices: Promoting ergonomic practices for staff working on NDIS applications is crucial to prevent strain and injury. Beanies Family Support will ensure that workstations are set up correctly, provide ergonomic equipment, and offer training on maintaining good posture and taking regular breaks. These measures help to create a comfortable and safe working environment for employees.

Confidentiality: Ensuring secure handling of client information is a key aspect of our NDIS application support services. Beanies Family Support will implement strict confidentiality policies and secure data management practices to protect client privacy. Staff will be trained on data protection protocols, and regular audits will be conducted to ensure compliance with privacy laws and organisational policies.

3. NDIS Support Coordination

Home Visits: Assessing and mitigating risks associated with home visits is essential to protect both staff and clients. Beanies Family Support will conduct risk assessments for all home visit situations, provide safety training for staff, and implement communication protocols to ensure safety during visits. These measures help to create a safe environment for delivering support coordination services.

Client Safety: Ensuring that support plans include measures to address client safety and well-being is a priority. Beanies Family Support will work with clients to identify potential risks and develop strategies to mitigate them. This collaborative approach ensures that clients feel safe and supported while receiving services.

4. Youth Coaching

Safe Activities: Planning and conducting youth coaching activities in a manner that ensures the safety of participants is critical. Beanies Family Support will develop risk assessments and safety plans for all activities, provide training for coaches on safe practices, and ensure that appropriate supervision is maintained. These measures help to create a positive and secure environment for youth coaching.

Supervision: Maintaining appropriate levels of supervision during all coaching sessions and activities is essential for ensuring participant safety. Beanies Family Support will establish clear guidelines on supervision ratios, provide training for staff on effective supervision techniques, and conduct regular evaluations to ensure compliance. This ensures that all activities are conducted safely and that participants receive the support they need.

5. Early Intervention Support

Safe Environment: Ensuring that environments for early intervention support are safe and conducive to learning and development is crucial. Beanies Family Support will conduct regular safety inspections, implement safety protocols, and provide training for staff on creating and maintaining safe environments. This proactive approach helps to support the development and well-being of young children.

Hygiene Practices: Implementing hygiene practices to prevent the spread of illness in early intervention settings is essential for protecting the health of children and staff. Beanies Family Support will establish guidelines on hand hygiene, cleaning procedures, and illness prevention, and provide training for staff. These measures help to create a healthy and safe environment for early intervention support.

6. Early Childhood Service Consulting

Site Assessments: Conducting thorough site assessments to identify and mitigate hazards in early childhood service environments is a key component of our consulting services. Beanies Family Support will use comprehensive checklists and risk assessment tools to evaluate safety in these settings and provide detailed recommendations for improvements. This ensures that early childhood services can offer safe and supportive environments for children.

Best Practices: Advising clients on WHS best practices in early childhood settings is essential for promoting safety and quality. Beanies Family Support will provide guidance on safety protocols, staff training, and safety culture development. By sharing our expertise, we help early childhood services implement effective WHS practices that protect children and staff.

7. Counselling

Confidential Space: Ensuring that counselling sessions are conducted in private, secure, and comfortable environments is critical for client confidentiality and well-being. Beanies Family Support will provide appropriate facilities, establish protocols for maintaining privacy, and train staff on confidentiality practices. This helps to create a safe and supportive space for clients to receive counselling.

Emergency Protocols: Establishing protocols for managing emergencies during counselling sessions is essential for client and staff safety. Beanies Family Support will develop emergency response plans, provide training for counsellors on handling emergencies, and ensure that appropriate resources are available. These measures help to ensure that emergencies are managed effectively and safely.

8. Community Event Support

Event Safety Plans: Developing and implementing safety plans for community events is crucial for ensuring the safety of participants. Beanies Family Support will conduct risk assessments for all events, develop detailed safety plans, and provide training for event staff and volunteers. These measures help to prevent accidents and injuries and ensure that events are conducted safely.

Crowd Management: Ensuring effective crowd management strategies to prevent accidents and injuries is essential for large community events. Beanies Family Support will establish guidelines on crowd control, provide training for staff and volunteers, and implement measures such as barriers and signage to manage crowds safely. These strategies help to create a safe environment for all event participants.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular Audits: Conducting regular WHS audits is essential to ensure compliance with policies and procedures. Beanies Family Support will use structured audit tools to evaluate our WHS practices, identify areas for improvement, and ensure that our safety standards are consistently met. Regular audits help to maintain a high level of safety and compliance.

Performance Metrics: Establishing performance metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of WHS practices is important for continuous improvement. Beanies Family Support will develop key performance indicators (KPIs) for WHS, track performance against these metrics, and use the data to inform decision-making. This helps to ensure that our WHS practices are effective and aligned with our safety goals.

Continuous Improvement: Using audit findings and feedback to inform continuous improvement of WHS practices is essential for maintaining a safe work environment. Beanies Family Support will review audit results, gather feedback from staff and clients, and

implement changes to enhance our WHS practices. This proactive approach ensures that we are always striving to improve safety and health outcomes.

Conclusion

Beanies Family Support is committed to maintaining the highest standards of work health and safety. By adhering to the guidelines outlined in this WHS Policy, we aim to ensure a safe and healthy work environment for all employees, volunteers, clients, and visitors, thereby supporting the delivery of consistent and high-quality services.