

As a part of our wider activities, the service divisions of Caringa Enterprises provide a range of support options to children and vulnerable young people with a disability who are 12-17 years old. These supports include residential, respite, day programs, social support and employment, and in addition, we provide brokered services to younger clients in Voluntary Out Of Home Care.

This policy focuses on our commitment to supporting active participation by children and young people in our services, to the provision of guidance to staff and volunteers on how to behave when around or working with children and young people in our organisation, and sets out how we ensure that the people working with children and young people or influencing service provision have the suitable clearances to do so.

This policy is underpinned by the Caringa Service Management Policy Manual, our Quality Policy, our Privacy Policy, divisional policy manuals, associated Procedures and Work Instructions.

It has been developed in accordance with the recommendations of the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) and to align with the National Standards for Disability Services, and as a result of consultation with Caringa staff, service users and parents.

It is also available at [www.caringa.com.au](http://www.caringa.com.au) under the publications tab.

We want children and young people participating in our programs to have a safe and happy experience during their time with us. We commit to listen to and respect the views of our children and young people, and to involve them in decision making on matters that involve them. We seek open and honest feedback about us from all service users, and welcome suggestions on how we can improve our services, our Code of Conduct and this policy.

The Caringa commitment to continual improvement includes monitoring for risk by our Board of Directors, managers and staff. We respond to identified risk by adopting strategies to minimise the likelihood of impact, and by subsequent review of the actions we have taken.

We commit to respect, fairness and consideration for our staff and volunteers. We provide our Policies, Complaints Handling process, and Code of Conduct to all staff on induction and provide regular information sessions to reinforce understanding.

All employees are made aware of this policy and their mandatory reporting obligations, and receive training in detection and reporting of neglect and abuse upon induction. We assign senior staff to guide, support and supervise them during the course of their work with children and young people.

New employment applications must contain the details of referees for contact. Caringa employees and volunteers must satisfy a mandatory Police Check every four years and provide a valid Working with Children Check Clearance for verification upon commencement and each five years thereafter.

Caringa supports the right of all service users and staff to make a complaint without fear of reprisal and to have it dealt with in an effective and competent manner.

Individuals are encouraged to raise their concern with a supervisor or manager within the service area who will make all attempts to solve the issue or problem at hand.

If a satisfactory solution is not agreed, assistance will be provided to set the complaint down in writing to a higher authority. External mediators are available to assist resolution if required.

Details of our grievance resolution process are displayed in pictorial form in work areas.

A Complaints Register is maintained by the Caringa Executive Assistant and progress toward resolution is monitored.

Children and young people who are joining our program/s will be informed about, and have access to this policy, our Code of Conduct and our Grievance Handling policy and processes. Clients are informed of their right to approach the NSW Ombudsman to review the process or outcome.

Caringa has established a range of communication methods allowing all parties to inform and seek feedback through meetings, print, surveys, and social and electronic media.

We commit to protecting the private and personal information of all those we contact. In certain circumstances we may share information with other service providers as authorised by law <sup>(1)</sup>.

We commit to providing behaviour management strategies for children and young people which comply with care and protection legislation<sup>(2,3)</sup> and Statutory Procedures for VOOHC.

Caringa management and staff will review this policy in consultation with service users and their families, at least every two years. The scheduled date for the next review is May 2019.

Approved:  Rachel Choy, CEO, Caringa Enterprises Ltd 26/05/2017

**You can use these references to find out more about us and how we implement this policy:**

Online and mobile at [www.caringa.com.au](http://www.caringa.com.au) and [www.facebook.com/CaringaEnterprisesLtd](https://www.facebook.com/CaringaEnterprisesLtd)

**CEL DOC-031 Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers and Guardians**

**RES DOC-001 Respite Participant Handbook:**

- Participation and Individualised planning; Feedback opportunities

**CEL DOC-018 Service Management Policy & Procedure Manual:**

- Recruitment and staff checks; Caringa staff Code of Conduct and Ethics
- Communication; Organisational Structure, Delegations and Oversight
- Record and file Control and Security
- Complaints and Grievance Resolution

**CEL DOC-015 Quality Manual**

- Monitoring, Improvement and Review
- Internal and External Communication

**CEL DOC-019 Privacy Policy**

- How Personal Information is collected, managed and stored

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - UNICEF**

**Divisional Policy Manuals and associated Procedures and Work Instructions**

**National Standards for Disability Services**

**AS/NZS ISO9001 Quality Management Systems – Requirements**

**Disability Inclusion Act and Regulation (2014)**

**Statutory Procedures for Voluntary Out Of Home Care (2017)**

**Children and Young Persons Care and Protection Act (1998) <sup>1</sup>Chapter 16A, <sup>2</sup> section 158 and Regulation (2012) <sup>3</sup> Clause 86**