

Mansfield Autism Statewide Services

Health and Wellness Policy and Procedures

HS3	Health and Safe Services	Health and Wellness Policy and Procedures
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What this policy aims to do	Ensure clients have information, encouragement and support to lead healthy lives, to help prevent health problems and contribute to people enjoying the best possible quality of life.
Who this policy applies to	All people who use MASS services and all staff and volunteers involved in service delivery.
Who is responsible for carrying out this policy	The CEO or responsible managers and service delivery staff.
What words used in this policy mean	<i>'Health'</i> is a state of physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. <i>'Wellbeing'</i> is physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual wellness.
Legislation this policy is based on	National Disability Service Standards Victorian Human Services Standards NDIS Practice Standards Nov 2021, Core Module.
Other relevant policies	HS1 Client Health Care Needs HS8 Positive Behaviour Support HS13 Duty of Care HS14 Child Safe A8 Providing Personal Care

Version	Date	Author/Editor	Approved by	Notes
1.0	26/8/2016	Peter Lane		
1.1	31/5/2018	D Stephenson		Update format

1.2	3/4/2019	D Stephenson		Removed providing personal care and created new policy in the Appropriate domain A8. Added Health Support Plan information.
1.3	21/5/2020	S Walker	S. Reeves	Added Individual Health Plans
1.4	18/2/2021	D Stephenson		Added reference to NDIS Practice Standards.
1.5	18/01/2022	T de Vries	S Reeves	Added key principles and friendships.
1.6	26/04/2022	T de Vries	S. Reeves	Added anti-bullying section
1.7	11/07/2023	T de Vries	S. Reeves	Annual review, new template

HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICY

Health and Wellness Policy

All MASS services are underpinned by the benefits of:

- Exercise
- Being in nature
- Healthy eating
- Increased independence
- Developing good sleep
- Developing good hygiene
- Good relationships with family and friends.

Wherever possible, clients are supported and encouraged to engage in physical activities and exercise in nature, to have health goals and to receive support to achieve these goals as part of their individual plan and day-to-day support.

In services where clients receive meals prepared by MASS staff, they will be provided with healthy and nutritious meals. Meal plans for clients will consider the proactive management of emerging and existing chronic health risks (such as diabetes and overweight/obesity). MASS staff will promote, encourage and model healthy eating.

MASS staff will provide information, encouragement and support so people using MASS services can be given regular medical and dental examinations to help prevent health problems.

MASS staff will provide information, encouragement and support to people using MASS services to help them make healthy life choices.

Clients are encouraged and supported to develop friendships. The importance of friendships is recognised to help young people feel safe and be less isolated. The nature of MASS services means that autistic children are often on camps, placements or at school together. Client pairings are done with care and thought to help create the best possible social interactions.

MASS Culture

Our focus on health and wellness is embedded in our culture:

- We are guided by our values: honesty, integrity, loyalty, dedication and a sense of fun.
- As driven by our history, our focus is on our clients and their family. We work together to build their capacity and confidence. We willingly share our knowledge and work in partnership with other services.
- We set goals and have high expectations for our clients. We take a hand-on approach, are willing to take risks and have an overall will to succeed.
- We promote health and wellbeing and time spent in nature: exercise, healthy eating, and sleep routines.
- Our staff work together, are open and willing to learn, support each other and are part of the collective.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICY

Anti-bullying

MASS teachers and staff have a duty of care to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students. In discharging this duty, principals, teachers and other school staff are held to a high standard of care in relation to students. The duty requires all staff to take all reasonable steps to reduce the risk of harm to students, including the implementation of strategies to prevent bullying. The duty is non-delegable, meaning that it cannot be assigned to another party.

MASS will ensure that all members of the school community have a clear and shared understanding of acceptable behaviour, unacceptable behaviour and how to recognise the signs of when bullying, including cyber bullying, might be taking place.

- a) **Bullying behaviour** takes different forms and is almost always deliberate, repeated and indicative of an imbalance of power. Bullying behaviour seeks to harm, humiliate, dominate, intimidate, embarrass, ostracise, or isolate. Some specific types of bullying behaviour include:
 - Verbal or written abuse
 - Violence or threats of violence
 - Sexual harassment and homophobia
 - Discrimination, including racial discrimination.
- b) **Cyberbullying** is bullying using digital technologies, including mobile phones, email and social media tools.

There are also some behaviours, which although they might be unpleasant or distressing, are not bullying. When working with clients with autism, these behaviours can be a form of communication and / or repetitive and restrictive behaviours which will be addressed through an intervention plan.

Behaviours which are **not** bullying are:

- a) **Mutual conflict**: involves an argument or disagreement between people but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- b) **Social rejection or dislike**: is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.
- c) **Single-episode acts**: physical aggression. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, this does not mean that single episodes of physical aggression should be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours. Single episode acts aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying but will be dealt with in an appropriate way.

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MASS recognises that many of our clients are at risk of being the victim of bullying behaviours and will work with our students to recognise bullying behaviours and empower our students to identify, respond and report any behaviours of concern.

School staff, parents and other students should know how to recognise the warning signs that may result in changed behaviour at school or at home. Examples of changed behaviour are listed in the advice for parents given in the Bully Stoppers program¹. School will be a safe space to communicate concerns.

MASS has a publicly available **complaints policy** that provides an escalation procedure when the school's response to a bullying incident is thought to have been inadequate or unsatisfactory.

Cyberbullying is bullying using digital technologies including mobile phones, email and social media tools. Cyberbullying includes:

- **Pranking:** Repeated hang ups, anonymous, mocking or threatening phone calls.
- **Image sharing:** Forwarding or sharing unflattering or private images without permission.
- **Sexually explicit images:** People of any age, who forward or share images of a sexual nature of a person under 18 need to be aware that this is a criminal offence (child pornography) that may result in prosecution.
- **Text and email:** Sending insulting or threatening text messages or emails.
- **Personal online information:** Publishing online someone's private, personal or embarrassing information without permission, or spreading rumours online.
- **Identity theft:** Assuming someone's identity online and negatively representing them in a way that damages their reputation or relationships.
- **Hate sites:** Creating hate sites or implementing social exclusion campaigns on social networking sites.

It is also cyberbullying when a student, or students, uses technology to run a multi-step campaign to bully another student. For example, setting another student up to be assaulted, video-recording their humiliation, posting the video-recording online and then sending the website address to others.