**PROCEDURE Client Incident Response, Reporting and Investigation**

# PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that incidents involving Highlands Holistic’s clients are responded to, reported, investigated and finalised in an effective and timely manner, and in accordance with legislative and contractual requirements.

In addition, the procedure outlines how Highlands Holistic will:

* address the physical and psychological needs of a client following an incident in order to reduce the impact of the incident and to maximise their wellbeing and
* seek to prevent incidents occurring through systematic review and analysis of incident trends and implementing improvement initiatives.

# SCOPE

This procedure applies to all Highlands Holistic clients, employees and students.

**In the event that the incident relates to either suspected, observed or alleged abuse or neglect of a client, the requirements contained in the Responding to Abuse and Neglect of a Client Procedure must also be complied with.**

Should the client incident also fit the criteria for an employee incident, then the Accident/Incident Reporting Procedure must also be followed.

# DEFINITIONS

*Employee*

For the purposes of this procedure, employee refers to paid employees, contractors and students.

*Incident*

An event that has the potential to or actually causes injury, harm or other adverse impacts to clients and/or an event where a client contributes to the potential or actual injury, harm or other adverse impacts to others.

*Serious incident*

Any incident that has the potential to, or results in, a serious outcome for clients or where a client contributes to potential or actual serious outcomes to others.

These include but are not limited to:

* Death.
* Abuse and neglect including concern for a person’s welfare and suspected abuse.
* Serious physical injury.
* Serious illness.
* Attempted suicide of a client.
* Dysphagia incidents – including choking and aspiration.
* Near miss incident that could have resulted in a serious outcome.
* Any incident where emergency services are called.
* Client as a missing person.
* Client behaviours of concern that had the potential to, or resulted in, a serious outcome for another person.

*Minor incident*

Any incident that threatens the health, safety and/or wellbeing of clients or where a client contributes to a situation that threatens the health, safety and/or wellbeing of others.

These include but are not limited to:

* Client behaviours of concern resulting in minimal impact on themselves or others.
* Minor injury.

*Principal*

The manager of the service who is responsible for the service where the client incident occurred.

# PROCEDURAL DETAILS

All client incidents must be reported in accordance with this procedure.

## Incident response and reporting

At the time an employee becomes aware of a client incident, either at the time it occurs or subsequent to the event, they must immediately:

* Protect the client from further harm

Employees who fail to respond immediately and protect the client from further harm following an incident are in breach of duty of care and this procedure, and may be subject to disciplinary action.

* Apply and seek first aid and contact emergency services

Apply or seek first aid if required and contact the Ambulance service on 000 in the event that a client sustains a serious injury requiring medical treatment or is in urgent need of medical help.

The NSW Police Service must be called immediately on 000 in any situation where life or serious injury is threatened; or where there is a threat of danger to people or property; when a serious crime is in progress, being witnessed or just committed (for example physical or sexual assault); or any other situation where urgent NSW Police Service assistance is needed.

In all other cases the Principal must be contacted to authorise any contact with the NSW Police Service.

* Implement immediate response requirements for suspected, observed or alleged abuse and neglect of clients incidents

Follow the steps required for the immediate response to suspected, observed or alleged abuse and neglect of clients as contained in the Responding to Abuse and Neglect Procedure.

* Protect evidence

Secure the scene of the incident if appropriate, for investigation purposes.

* Contact the Principal
* Complete a Client Incident Report Form

The employee who identified the incident must, within two hours of the incident taking place or being identified:

* complete the Client Incident Report Form and email it to linda@highlandsholistic.com.au

**The following steps for serious incidents must be followed**

The employee who identified the incident must:

* Contact the Principal

After protecting the client from further harm, attending to the client’s medical needs and contacting the emergency services (if required), the employee who became aware of the serious incident must immediately make a verbal report to the service supervisor either in person or by telephone (or by telephone to the out of hours supervisor) within 30 minutes of becoming aware of the incident. Leaving a message or sending a text must be followed up until receiving a reply to the message.

* Implement any follow up actions as directed by the Principal.

Implement any actions as directed by the Principal including communicating with the client’s emergency contact regarding the incident.

The Principal:

* Confirm with the employee reporting the incident that the incident is a “serious incident” in accordance with the definition contained in this procedure.
* Authorise any further contact with the NSW Police Service on 000 if an emergency situation still exists and where the NSW Police Service have not already been called, or contact the NSW Police Service on 131 444 for attendance in non-emergency situations where it is believed that a crime may have been committed.
* Agree further immediate action to be taken by the employee reporting the incident.
* Immediately following the conversation with the employee reporting the incident, telephone the service manager to advise them of the incident, the actions taken to date and the planned immediate actions to be taken, by when and by whom.

## Incident investigation

### For suspected abuse and neglect incidents:

Specific requirements for the investigation of abuse and neglect of clients must be followed and these are located in the Responding to Abuse and Neglect of Clients Procedure.

### For serious incidents:

The Principal must:

* Liaise with the NSW Police Service if required to assist them in their investigations.
* In the event that, as a result of the internal investigation an employee was found to have breached relevant Highlands Holistic’s policies and procedures or was found to be criminally responsible, the Principal will take any necessary disciplinary action as per the recommendations contained in the investigation report.

### For minor incidents:

The Principal must review all minor incidents, identify any actions required to finalise the incident and to minimise the chance of incidents reoccurring, within seven days of the incident being reported. Full records of incidents, including details of reviews, actions and outcomes must be recorded in the client file.

### Whole of service review of incidents

Following the report, appropriate improvements aiming to prevent client incidents, reduce their impact and improve services must be implemented.

# responsibilities

It is the responsibility of each employee to ensure that they remain informed regarding Highlands Holistic procedures which impact upon their duties, and to work within them.

# CONTINUOUS improvement

All Highlands Holistic employees are encouraged to provide feedback on this procedure to their supervisor, to ensure that it remains relevant and continues to reflect the actual manner in which activities are undertaken.

| **RELATED FORMS** |
| --- |
| FORM Client Incident Report |
| FORM Feedback and Complaints |

| **RELATED QMS DOCUMENTS** |
| --- |
| POLICY Clients Human Rights and Freedom from Abuse and Neglect |
| POLICY Duty of Care |
| POLICY Occupational Safety and Health |
| POLICY Safeguarding for Clients |
| PROCEDURE Client Services Governance |
| PROCEDURE Code of Conduct |
| PROCEDURE Feedback and Complaints |
| PROCEDURE Community Living Services Death of a Client |
| PROCEDURE Responding to Abuse and Neglect of a Client |
| PROCEDURE Incident Reporting and Investigation |
| PROCEDURE Supporting and Reporting Client Behaviours of Concern |

| **RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS** |
| --- |
| Disability Services Act (1993), section 25(4) |
| National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 |
| NDIS (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules |