BCH STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Date: 26 August 2025

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SAFETY AND WELLBEING

Ballarat Community Health (BCH) understands that children and young people can be especially vulnerable and may face risks of harm. At BCH we consider children and young people to be someone under the age of 18, in accordance with Victorian legislation.

We also know that discrimination, income, education, access to healthcare, and social support, collectively referred to as the social determinants of health, can significantly impact a person's health outcomes and overall quality of life.

People who experience discrimination includes, but is never limited to:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Culturally diverse people, including those with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Asexual and more (LGBTIQA+) people
- People with disability

When it comes to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people BCH is committed to:

- Providing a safe space where children and young people feel secure and comfortable.
- Supporting and promoting good health and wellbeing of children and young people through our services, as one of four key pillars Strategic Pillar 2 – Health and wellbeing for children and young people in our Strategic Plan 2024-2029.
- Ensuring that the voices of children and young people, their families, and caregivers are heard when it comes to decisions that affect their lives and to disclose concerns they may have about their safety.
- Respecting the diverse and unique identities of all children and young people. This includes the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, with a disability or identify as LGBTIQA+.

These commitments are underpinned by the following practices:

- BCH have zero tolerance of child abuse. If there is ever a concern or any suspicions of harm, we take it very seriously and are committed to acting responsibly by informing the right authorities and ensuring the child's safety comes first.
- BCH has strict recruitment processes, ongoing staff training, and supervision to make sure everyone working with children and young people can keep them safe. All staff, volunteers, and students follow a set of rules called a Code of Conduct to guide their behaviour.
- BCH has proactive measures in place to prevent and identify potential harm and emerging risks and will take the necessary steps to address them in a timely manner. BCH encourages an open environment where staff, children and young people feel comfortable discussing any concerns about safety without fear.
- BCH values the thoughts and feelings of children and young people, families, and caregivers, and we involve them in planning and decisions about their care to ensure their needs are met.

Our commitment is further described and implemented through our BCH Safety & Wellbeing of Children & Young People Policy and associated procedures.

Ballarat Community Health provides direct services including support, information and advocacy to clients in this area. For more information contact Ballarat Community Health on (03) 5338 4500.