

Workplace Aggression and Violence Policy

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all participants, staff, volunteers, contractors, and visitors are supported in a safe, respectful environment, free from aggression and violence. SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd is committed to maintaining a zero-tolerance approach to aggression, violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation within our service settings.

This policy outlines our commitment to responding promptly and appropriately to any incidents, prioritising participant rights, staff safety, safeguarding, and trauma-informed, culturally sensitive practices in all interactions.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all staff, participants, visitors, and anyone engaging with SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd services or premises.

3.0 Policy

SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd is committed to ensuring the safety, dignity, and wellbeing of all individuals involved in its service environment. Our organisation maintains zero tolerance for workplace aggression and violence and is dedicated to the prevention, reduction, and appropriate response to any such incidents.

This policy is guided by the NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators (2021), the NDIS Code of Conduct (2018), the NDIS (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018, the NDIS (Worker Screening) Rules 2018, and the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. Where children are involved, our response also aligns with the NDIS Child Safe Principles.

All individuals within the organisation are entitled to a service environment that:

- Promotes dignity, respect, and human rights
- Prioritises safety and wellbeing
- Supports trauma-informed and culturally safe care for participants
- Identifies and manages risk proactively
- Embeds continuous improvement by analysing incidents and implementing learnings

Aggression, threats, violence, and any behaviour that may cause harm or distress are not tolerated and will be addressed in accordance with:

- NDIS incident management and reporting obligations
- Participant safeguarding frameworks
- The Reportable Incident, Accident and Emergency Policy and Procedure
- Continuous improvement and risk management processes

Staff, volunteers, and contractors must:

- Act in accordance with the NDIS Code of Conduct and organisational values at all times
- Hold current NDIS Worker Screening Clearance, and Working with Children Check where relevant
- Take immediate steps to prevent and report any aggressive or violent behaviour
- Support participants with culturally respectful and trauma-informed responses to conflict
- Encourage safe participation and uphold the rights of individuals to live free from harm

SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd ensures that preventative measures, training, and post-incident supports are in place to reduce the occurrence and impact of aggression and violence in the workplace. This includes clear communication of behavioural expectations to participants, risk-based service planning, access to independent advocacy, debriefing after incidents, and a safe and fair complaints process.

All incidents of aggression or violence will be treated seriously and confidentially. The safety of individuals, particularly vulnerable participants, will always be prioritised, and relevant authorities such as the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission will be notified as required.

4.0 Definitions

Term	Description
Aggression:	A tendency toward unprovoked offensives; quarrelsome or belligerent
Violence	Physical attack on an individual or property by another individual or group
Violent acts	For example: • threats of violence; • threats of a sexual nature; • emotional abuse; • verbal abuse, in person or over the phone; • "ganging up" on an individual by a group

5.0 Responsibility

- Management is responsible for ensuring policies, procedures, and systems are in place to prevent or reduce the risk of aggression/violence

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- The Manager is responsible for taking all practical measures to ensure that the organisational workplace is safe from the risk of aggression/violence and must take prompt remedial action to eliminate aggressive/violent behaviour. Measures taken should include:
 - identifying, assessing and controlling risks of aggression/violence
 - regular consultation with staff and volunteers to review and monitor procedures to ensure effectiveness
 - the provision of adequate resources to effectively implement control measures and prevention
 - the provision of adequate and appropriate post-incident support for participants, staff, volunteers and others
 - training staff and volunteers to develop the ability to anticipate and manage critical or violent incidents
- All staff and volunteers must cooperate with this policy to ensure health and safety
- All staff and volunteers involved in responding to incidents of aggression/violence must hold a current NDIS Worker Screening Clearance, and meet all state-based Working with Children Check requirements where relevant. All staff are required to act in accordance with the NDIS Code of Conduct, including:
 - Preventing harm to participants and others
 - Respecting participant dignity and rights during all interactions
 - Reporting any act of violence or aggression in line with safeguarding obligations incidents to the Manager, who will, in turn, inform the management
 - Seeking participant consent and involving advocates where needed

6.0 Procedure

6.1 Participant assessment and conduct

The Manager is required to minimise aggression/violence risks by letting participants know what is expected. Staff involved in the participant's initial assessment must be appropriately trained and are required to:

1. Verify all information received during the initial interview before accepting the participant into the organisation
2. Make eligibility criteria clear to participants, including providing information that participants who display aggressive or violent behaviour will be excluded from SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd services
3. Make the code of behaviour for participants clear, i.e. verbalise the required code of behaviour, which includes:
 - participants should act in a manner that respects the rights of other participants, staff, volunteers, and persons outside the organisation
 - participants to play their part in helping the organisation provide everyone with safe services

4. Outline the consequences of failure to comply with the required code of behaviour (i.e. possible exclusion from SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd services)
5. Inform participants they have a right to be protected from harm or abuse by other participants, staff, volunteers and persons outside the organisation. That action will be taken if this occurs
6. Refer participants who need psychiatric treatment, detoxification and drug and alcohol rehabilitation to other services as appropriate

Participants whose behaviour may result in exclusion from services due to aggression or violence will be provided with clear explanations of the behaviour of concern, opportunities to respond and be heard, and support to access an advocate if desired. Decisions will follow principles of procedural fairness and natural justice, ensuring participants' rights are respected.

All incidents of aggression and violence will be analysed for trends and systemic risks as part of our Continuous Improvement processes. Lessons learned from incidents will inform updates to risk management, staff training, and participant support planning. This is recorded in the Continuous Improvement Register, and reviewed quarterly by management.

6.2 General Procedures

6.2.1 Controlling violence:

Control procedures should be implemented whenever violence risks are identified and assessed. Violence control measures should be:

- a part of standard workplace procedures and designs
- implemented following a review of a violent incident

6.2.2 Staff and volunteers:

On commencement of service, staff and volunteers must have explained that the organisation will not tolerate aggressive or violent behaviour. Any evidence of this behaviour from any participant, carer, staff or volunteer will result in appropriate action being taken with every possibility of them being requested to leave.

Volunteers who feel threatened should if at all possible, remove themselves from the situation immediately and notify the relevant supervisor. If this is not possible, they must notify the police immediately and let them handle the situation. Volunteers should not put themselves in danger.

6.2.3 Identifying and assessing the potential for aggression/violence:

The Manager should attempt to identify where aggression/violence may occur and the impact it could have. To achieve this, they need to carry out the following on an annual basis:

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- consultation with other staff and volunteers;
- review of previous Incident Reports where violence was involved

The organisation must keep records of all Incident Reports to assess the potential for aggression/violence. Any aggressive/violent incident (actual or implied) should be checked against previous incidents to establish a trend.

6.2.4 Initial assessment interview/home visits:

Before the initial assessment is conducted in a person's home, as much information as possible regarding their potential for aggressive/violent behaviour should be obtained. If an individual has the potential for aggressive or violent behaviour, then one of two decisions must be made:

- a) the individual will be refused service based on the information already received;

OR

- b) an assessment will be conducted to verify the information conducted with two staff and the following procedures strictly adhered to:
 - inform an appropriate person of the address where they are going and expected arrival and return times. An appropriate person is someone who is:
 - available during all working hours;
 - able to monitor departure and return times; and
 - able to respond appropriately if the employee does not meet those expected times.
 - Staff must carry a charged mobile phone
 - On arrival at a participant's home or at a place that the staff is unfamiliar with, they should look around to establish exit points and any potential dangers. If possible, there should be two exits from rooms where visits or interviews are conducted
 - If staff feel concerned for their welfare, they should cease what they are doing and immediately leave the premises
 - Call the police and let them handle the situation if there has been a serious threat. Staff/volunteers, under no circumstances, are to put themselves in danger
 - Staff must be contacted if the expected return time is exceeded and set a new return time
 - If the employee is more than half an hour late and cannot be contacted, the police should be notified immediately

6.3 Post-incident procedures

All incidents of aggression and violence will be handled with strict confidentiality and respect for privacy. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis in line with our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.

Incidents involving harm, abuse, neglect, or serious injury to a participant are reportable and must be managed under the NDIS (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018. Staff must report them immediately to the Manager and follow the Reportable Incident, Accident, and Emergency Policy and Procedure.

Aggression, violence, or threats causing or potentially causing serious harm to a participant must be reported to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission within required timeframes. The Manager is responsible for submitting these reports as per policy.

After an incident of aggression or violence, participants, staff, and advocates will be provided opportunities to offer feedback on the incident's handling to inform continuous improvement. Feedback will be recorded and reviewed in line with our Continuous Improvement Policy.

Participants involved in or affected by aggression/violence incidents will be offered a debrief session facilitated by a trusted staff member and provided access to independent advocacy support if desired. The debrief will focus on restoring safety, trust, and participant choice in ongoing supports.

6.3.1 Minor aggression:

Following a minor incident such as a verbal attack;

- The Manager is to be alerted immediately
- The Incident Form must be completed
- The parties involved will be individually interviewed by the Manager
- Any staff or volunteer involved should be disciplined as appropriate
- Participants will be advised of the consequence of their actions (i.e. possible withdrawal of services)

6.3.2 Major aggression/violence:

Following a major aggressive/violent incident, particularly where physical harm has occurred, the following procedure must be followed:

- immediately call the police, and if necessary, the ambulance service
- alert the Manager without delay
- provide first aid and comfort to those who are injured/traumatised
- leave the scene undisturbed for the police
- request witnesses to remain until the police arrive, and if this is not possible, obtain their names and contact phone numbers,
- document everything that has occurred on the Incident Form
- provide critical incident stress debriefing and give relief from duties for Staff/volunteers involved
- reportable incidents must be reported as per Reportable Incident, Accident and Emergency Policy and Procedure

- An investigation must be carried out (see Reportable Incident, Accident and Emergency Policy and Procedure)
- The family of participants, staff and volunteers are contacted by the Manager

6.4 General guidelines for dealing with aggression/violence

Staff and volunteers will receive training on how to recognise the possibility of aggression/violence occurring and how to respond in the event of verbal and physical attacks. No employee or volunteer is expected to physically defend themselves against a violent physical attack, although they can use reasonable force to protect themselves.

6.4.1 Verbal threats

Volunteers being verbally attacked should leave the situation immediately and contact the relevant Manager. Staff who are verbally attacked should:

- assess the emotional/mental state of the participant (i.e. frustrated, disturbed, under the influence of drugs or alcohol);
- try to accommodate their needs;
- use assertive, non-aggressive language;
- assess the potential for the situation to become physically violent;
- seek the presence of another employee/volunteer if at all possible;

6.4.2 Physical violence

When confronted with physical violence:

- Do not attempt to physically stop the person by stepping in between them and the person/property they are attacking
- Do not attempt to restrain anyone unless it is a life-threatening situation and there are no other options
- Calmly try to reason with anyone attacking others
- or property and ask them to stop
- Ensure that you use soothing words and body language and speak quietly but firmly
- If all attempts to diffuse the violence have failed and there is a real threat of physical harm or lives at risk, LEAVE IMMEDIATELY AND CALL THE POLICE
- Contact the Manager

6.4.3 Post-Traumatic Stress

Participants, carers, staff and volunteers will be offered counselling following a violent incident. Senior Management should be trained in signs of post-traumatic stress syndrome recognition

6.4.4 Training

All staff and volunteers must attend appropriate training in aggressive behaviour or violent situations:

- Preventing and managing workplace aggression and violence
- De-escalation and conflict resolution strategies
- Trauma-informed care and communication
- Culturally safe responses to aggression/violence
- Responding to behaviours of concern and Positive Behaviour Support
- NDIS Code of Conduct and Safeguarding

Training will be recorded in the Staff Annual Organisational Training Register and Review and linked to individual training plans.

7.0 Related Documents

- Incident Report
- Incident Investigation Form
- Work Health Safety and Environmental Management Policy and Procedure
- Human Resource Management Policy and Procedure
- Reportable Incident Accident and Emergency Policy and Procedure

8.0 References

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- NDIS (Reportable Incident Management) Rules 2018