



Connected Kids  
Allied Health

## Participant Handbook

Updated January 2023



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## About Us

Our vision was to develop a business that would empower children and families alike, and to provide a space where they could access timely support for their concerns in a non-judgemental and collaborative environment.

### Contact Details

**Address:** 12 Dawson Street South

Ballarat Central, VIC 3350

**Phone:** 0427 848 587

**Email:** [admin@connectedkid.com.au](mailto:admin@connectedkid.com.au)

## Our Services

Our opening hours are 9AM – 5.30PM, Monday to Friday, by appointment only.

Our services include:

- Occupational Therapy – Assessment & Intervention;
- Speech Pathology – Assessment & Intervention;
- Mental Health support via Better Access to Mental Health Access;
- Parent groups; and
- Social skills groups.

For more information about these services please call us 0427 848 587 or speak to a member of our staff.

## Service Quality

To deliver its services to people with disability and their families, Connected Kids Allied Health complies with the Victoria *Disability Services Act 2006* and the Victoria *Disability Services Standards*. These standards ensure that we as a service provide you the highest quality services.

The *Disability Services Standards* are:

1. **Rights** - Each person receives a service that promotes and respects their legal and human rights and enables them to exercise choice like everyone else in the community.

2. **Participation and inclusion** - Each person is encouraged and supported to contribute to social and civic life in their communities in the way they choose.
3. **Individual outcomes** - Each person is supported to exercise choice and control over the design and delivery of their supports and services.
4. **Feedback and complaints** - When a person wants to make a complaint, their views are respected, they are informed as the complaint is dealt with, and they have the opportunity to be involved in the resolution process.
5. **Service access** - Each person is assisted to access the supports and services they need to live the life they choose.
6. **Service management** - Service providers are well managed and have strong and effective governance to deliver positive outcomes for the people they support.

As set out in this handbook, Connected Kids Allied Health is committed to delivering services in compliance with these standards and in continuously improving its service delivery. We operate in accordance with comprehensive policies and procedures, which are reviewed regularly and incorporate client and other stakeholder feedback.

## Your Rights

Connected Kids Allied Health respects and fully commits to upholding the rights of all people, including those with disabilities. We are also committed to ensuring you, our clients, are aware of your rights and responsibilities and can be confident in exercising them.

When you interact with Connected Kids Allied Health, you will:

- be respected and treated with dignity;
- have choice and control over your service delivery and have your autonomy and independence supported;
- receive high quality, safe and personally relevant services;
- have services provided by appropriately qualified staff;
- be assured that your personal and health information is kept private and confidential;
- be provided with all the information you need to make informed decisions;
- be supported to have a person of your choice support and advocate on your behalf;
- be supported by an interpreter or translator if required; and



- be encouraged and supported to pursue any complaints about our service provision.

You can request Connected Kids Allied Health full Client Charter from any of our staff members.

## **Diversity and Participation**

All aspects of Connected Kids Allied Health delivery promote clients' active participation and inclusion in the community. We support clients to develop and maintain their independence, problem solving, social and self-care skills, as appropriate to their age, developmental stage, cultural background, or other special needs. Ways we do this include:

- delivering services in a way that respects individuals' personal, gender, sexual, cultural, religious, or spiritual identity;
- employing and developing a diverse and culturally competent workforce;
- working collaboratively with disability-specific, mainstream, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) services to support holistic service delivery; and
- using a strengths-based approach to identifying individual client needs and life goals, particularly in relation to recognising the importance of family, extended family, kinship, cultural, spiritual, language and community ties.

### Interpreting and Translation

The delivery of safe, high-quality services relies on effective communication. Where required, interpreters and translators will be made available at no cost to support your interactions with us.

## **Advocacy**

Connected Kids Allied Health fully supports your right to have an independent advocate support you in your interactions with us. If you'd like help finding an independent advocate, speak to one of our staff.

The Disability Advocacy Finder (<https://askizzy.org.au/disability-advocacy-finder>) can assist in locating free Commonwealth funded services.

## **Privacy and Confidentiality**

Connected Kids Allied Health values and respects the privacy, confidentiality and dignity of our clients and their families, as well as our staff. We collect, use, protect and release personal information in full compliance with all relevant State and Federal privacy legislation.



Connected Kids Allied Health will only collect information necessary for safe and effective service delivery. We will only use information for the purpose it was collected and secure it safely. When we collect your information, we will explain why we are collecting the information and how we plan to use it. We will only take photos or videos of you with your full and voluntary consent.

Information about you will only be released to other people or services with your informed consent, in an emergency, or where such disclosure is required or authorised by law.

You may access the information we hold about you, including in order to update or correct it, subject to certain exceptions. If you wish to access your information, please speak to a staff member.

When your information is no longer needed for the purpose for which it was obtained, we will destroy or permanently de-identify it.

*You can request Connected Kids Allied Health full Privacy Statement from any of our staff members or access further information via our website.*

### **Feedback, Compliments and Complaints**

Compliments, complaints and other forms of feedback provide Connected Kids Allied Health with valuable information about client satisfaction and an opportunity to improve upon all aspects of our service.

We encourage feedback and comments on the services we provide, both positive and negative. Whether a compliment or complaint, your feedback will be treated with confidentiality and sensitivity.

Feedback, compliments and complaints can be lodged:

- Directly with a staff member, either verbally, in writing or via the online feedback form on our website
  - Address: 12 Dawson Street South, Ballarat Central, VIC, 3350
  - Phone: 0427 848 587
  - Email: [ashleigh@connectedkid.com.au](mailto:ashleigh@connectedkid.com.au)
  - Online form: <https://www.connectedkid.com.au/feedback-complaints>
  - QR Code in the reception area.

### **Feedback and Continuous Improvement**

In addition to the above, Connected Kids Allied Health is continually seeking feedback how we can improve the services we provide. This includes satisfaction surveys, requests for feedback by staff after you interact with us and involving clients and other stakeholders in our service delivery



planning and review processes. Please feel free to provide any suggestions or ideas to a staff member.

### Complaints

We encourage anyone with a complaint to speak directly to a Connected Kids Allied Health staff member in the first instance, who will attempt to resolve the issue immediately. If the matter cannot be resolved promptly or within 24 hours, it will be escalated to Connected Kids Allied Health Director as a grievance.

You can use Connected Kids Allied Health *Feedback and Complaints Form* to formally lodge your grievance and a staff member can assist you to do this if you wish.

Your complaint will be formally acknowledged within two working days and a staff member will keep you updated regarding its resolution. Connected Kids Allied Health aims to respond to all complaints and grievances as quickly as possible, and within 28 days from acknowledgement.

If a complaint or grievance cannot be responded to in full within 28 days of acknowledgement, you will be provided with an update, which will include when a full response can be expected.

If you feel a complaint has not been sufficiently or appropriately addressed, you can seek further support from Connected Kids Allied Health Director, or alternatively through any of the following agencies:

- *National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIS Participants)*
  - Email: [feedback@ndis.gov.au](mailto:feedback@ndis.gov.au)
  - Phone: 1800 800 110

NDIS participants purchasing products and services also have rights and protections under the Australian Consumer Law (ACL), including provisions on client guarantees and unfair contract terms.

All feedback and complaints will be used by Connected Kids Allied Health to continuously improve our service delivery.

### **Accessing Connected Kids Allied Health**

We aim to provide accessible services to you that are safe, engaging and responsive to your support and communication needs.

Access to services is based on relative need, service capacity, the best interests of the person wishing to use our service and any potential impact on existing clients.



Anyone wishing to access our services must participate in an initial assessment. Where required, we will provide you with information and support to access a person of your choice, such as an advocate, to assist you in this process. The purpose of this interview is to assess your needs, formulate goals and ascertain whether Connected Kids Allied Health is able to support you.

If you are offered services and accept, we will work with you and your supporters to assess your needs and develop and agree upon a Service Agreement. This will be completed during an Assessment/Planning Interview or soon after.

Once you are a client, we will review the provision of your supports every 6 months with you and your supporters. Flexibility will be provided in regard to the timing of review assessments, based on your needs and wishes, and you can request a review at any time.

#### Service Refusal

We will accept your choice if we offer you a service and you choose not to accept.

Connected Kids Allied Health may refuse to offer a person service where:

- they do not meet our eligibility requirements;
- other potential clients are assessed as a higher priority based on our Priority of Access considerations;
- we do not have the capacity to cater to additional clients; or
- we do not have the resources to cater to the specific needs of the person.

Where services cannot be provided, we will assist you with referrals and support to access alternative services.

#### Waiting List Processes

A person who meets Connected Kids Allied Health eligibility requirements and cannot be offered a service due to lack of service capacity can elect to be placed on our Waiting List. Potential clients on our waiting list will be contacted at least every three months to:

- advise them of their current status;
- check whether they want to remain on the list; and
- advise the estimated wait time remaining.





### Appeal

Any person refused services has the right to appeal. Appeals should be directed in writing to the director of Connected Kids Allied Health.

### **Existing clients of Connected Kids Allied Health**

All clients have the right to exit Connected Kids Allied Health at any time and a decision to do so will not prejudice future access to the service. You must give us at least 2 weeks' notice if you wish to leave our services before the end date in your Service Agreement.

All clients exiting the service will be offered an Exit Interview, where we can discuss the reason for them leaving and obtain feedback about how we can improve our processes. We also provide assistance and resources to support people exiting or changing services. This includes an agreed Exit Plan, as well as the identification of, referral to and support accessing alternative services.

Clients who have chosen to exit our services have the right to re-access services within a 1-month period of exiting, without having to follow formal access processes, provided the necessary resources are available.

If you wish to end your service provision, please speak to a Connected Kids Allied Health staff member.

### Service Termination

Connected Kids Allied Health may terminate a client's services when:

- they are unwilling over a period of time to work towards agreed goals;
- the risk is too great for other people using the service or staff being at risk of harm;
- financial requirements are not being met;
- severe incompatibility with other clients using the service is displayed;
- dramatic health changes require significantly increased levels of care or a service model not provided by Connected Kids Allied Health; or
- The level of risk is unable to be managed in the private sector and a referral to a crisis or tertiary service is more appropriate to the needs of the participant.

Any person whose services are terminated has the right to appeal. Appeals should be directed in writing to the Director.



## **Fees and Charges**

Fees and charges for our services vary depending on the service and the source of funding for that service (e.g. government funded or client funded).

We will discuss prices with you before providing services. NDIS Participants will be aware of the all fees, as they will be outlined in the Service Agreement.

The Service Agreement contains detailed information about the services we will provide you and when fees must be paid. The Service Agreement will be completed with the participant/representative before services commence.

Connected Kids Allied Health will provide you with regular invoices and statements to assist you to manage payment for our services. If you have difficulty paying your fees for any reason, we encourage you to discuss this with a staff member so that mutually acceptable payment arrangements can be put in place.

## **Freedom from Harm, Abuse and Neglect**

When visiting our office or taking part in our services, you have the right to be free from harm and any form of abuse or neglect. Connected Kids Allied Health treats any allegation of abuse, assault or neglect very seriously.

Allegations may be subject to both mandatory reporting and police involvement. If you have any concerns or are aware of a situation where abuse or neglect may be occurring, please notify a Connected Kids Allied Health staff member.

Connected Kids Allied Health employs skilled staff who respect the rights of people with disability, are aware of current policies and legislation pertaining to abuse, neglect and unexplained absences and will support people and their families, guardians and advocates to access complaint mechanisms and raise any concerns they have about our services.

All staff undergo comprehensive criminal history screening and other mandatory checks prior to employment.

### Work Health and Safety

Connected Kids Allied Health is committed to providing services in a safe and healthy environment. Work Health and Safety (WH&S) is the responsibility of all Connected Kids Allied Health stakeholders – including staff, clients, clients, families, carers and visitors.

We ask that you report any hazards or risks you become aware of and act in a way that protects yours and others' health and safety when visiting our office or participating in our services.



## **Community Participation and Inclusion**

Connected Kids Allied Health is committed to working with you to dismantle barriers, change attitudes and promote positive attitudes to create opportunities for your full inclusion and participation in your community.

We work closely with a range of organisations to support you and encourage you to speak to a staff member if you have any specific needs or goals that could be met by another organisation.