

## HEALTH POLICY - MENTORING

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### PURPOSE

Sparkways Mentoring has a duty of care to provide and maintain a healthy and safe environment for all participants, whose health and well-being is of the utmost importance.

This policy will provide guidelines for:

- Managing and minimising the spread of illnesses, infectious diseases and viruses amongst program participants
  - Ensuring that all relevant health information is gathered and assessed for impact on participating in the program
  - Ensuring all participants are treated equitably and with respect, regardless of their medical diagnosis and/or health condition
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### POLICY STATEMENT

#### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Sparkways is committed to:

- providing a safe and healthy environment for all staff, volunteer mentors, young people and parents/ guardians (where applicable)
- creating an environment that supports, reflects and promotes equitable and inclusive behaviours and practices for participants with medical or health conditions
- responding to the needs of the young person or adult who presents with symptoms of an illness or infectious disease or medical condition while attending a program activity
- collecting the relevant health information during the screening process of all participants, to determine whether there is any impact on their ability to be involved in the program
- protecting the privacy of each individual's personal health information in accordance with the relevant legislation and privacy policy
- treating with sensitivity any young person or mentor who is unable to participate due to their medical or health condition

#### SCOPE

This policy applies to Mentoring Staff (including students), volunteer mentors, young people and parents / guardians

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 <b>RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	Sparkways Mentoring Staff	Volunteer Mentor	Young Person	Parent/Guardian
<p>During the screening process ensure that all medical and health information is collected / provided, detailing any ongoing medical or health concern and all relevant consent forms have been signed. <i>(refer Screening Policy)</i></p> <p>Medical and Health Conditions can include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allergies, Anaphylaxis and Asthma</li> <li>• Infectious diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis,</li> <li>• Mental health</li> <li>• Physical limitations or injuries</li> <li>• Medications</li> <li>• Alcohol and/or Drug use or dependency</li> </ul>	X	X	X	X
<p>Ensuring all participants are treated equitably and with respect, regardless of their medical diagnosis and/or health condition</p>	X	X	X	X
<p>Treating with sensitivity any young person or mentor who is unable to participate due to their medical or health condition. <i>(refer Screening Policy)</i></p>	X			
<p>Maintaining confidentiality at all times with regards to personal health information. <i>(refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy)</i></p>	X	X	X	X
<p>Securely storing and in accordance with current information privacy principles (Privacy Victoria) <i>(refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy)</i> all personal health information disclosed to Sparkways Mentoring.</p>	X			
<p>Responding to the needs of any young person or adult who presents with symptoms of an illness, infectious disease or medical condition while attending a program activity, to limit the risk of transmission to other participants <i>(refer First Aid Policy)</i></p>	X			
<p>Advising Mentoring staff as soon as practicable, when a mentor or young person becomes ill after attending a Mentoring activity day or match catch up.</p>		X	X	X
<p>Notifying all participants from an activity day when staff become aware a participant becoming ill after attending the day, including information about the nature of the illness, incubation and infectious periods as well as symptoms to be aware of.</p>	X			
<p>Ensuring that mentors and parents/guardians understand that they must inform all match participants and/or Mentoring staff as soon as practicable, if they or the young person is ill or infected with an infectious disease or medical condition, so that match catch ups and meetings can be paused until all parties recover. <i>(refer to Definitions)</i></p>	X	X	X	X

<p>Informing Mentoring staff about any new health condition or a pre-existing condition that becomes relevant to program participation, as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the condition or its relevance and at least prior to any further contact with their mentor/young person. Health conditions can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Short term health conditions</i> for example chicken pox, whooping cough, COVID-19. The match may simply be suspended until such time as the participant has recuperated and no longer poses a risk to the match and other participants.</li> <li>• <i>Long term health conditions</i>, for example diabetes. If the condition <i>does not</i> pose a risk to other participants, Sparkways Mentoring’s duty to provide a healthy and safe program may require: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) others to be informed of the relevant health condition (e.g. a parent/guardian, Mentee or Mentor);</li> <li>(b) others to be provided with information on the nature of the relevant health condition; and any precautions necessary to minimise any risk to health and safety to be implemented.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>If the condition <i>could potentially</i> pose a risk to any participants, Sparkways Mentoring will consider its duty to provide a healthy and safe program and consider if the match needs to be suspended or closed.</p>	X	X	X	X
Mentors, young people and parents/ guardians have the right to access and update any medical and health information at any time.		X	X	X
Conduct file reviews and revise this policy as needed to continue to meet the health needs of the program participants and align with relevant legislation requirements	X			



## BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

### LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)
- Information Privacy Act 2000(Vic)
- Public Records Act 1973 (Vic)
- Social Services Regulatory Scheme and Standards

**The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:**

Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: [www.legislation.vic.gov.au](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au)  
Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: [www.legislation.gov.au](http://www.legislation.gov.au)



## DEFINITIONS

**Communicable Disease Section:** Responsibility for communication and advice in relation to infectious diseases on behalf of the Secretary of the Victorian DH

**Illness:** Any sickness and/or associated symptoms that affect the child's normal participation in the program at the service.

**Infection:** The invasion and multiplication of micro-organisms in bodily tissue.

**Infestation:** The lodgement, development and reproduction of arthropods (such as head lice), either on the surface of the body of humans or animals, or in clothing

**Infectious disease:** An infectious disease designated by the Communicable Disease Section (*refer to Definitions*), Department of Health Victoria (DH) as well as those listed in Schedule 7 of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019*, the Minimum Period of Exclusion from Primary Schools, Education and Care Service Premises and Children's Centres for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts



## SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

### SOURCES

- Victorian Department of Health. Disease information and advice. Available at: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice>
- WorkSafe, Victoria (2008) Compliance code: First aid in the workplace: <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/compliance-code-first-aid-workplace>

### RELATED POLICIES

- Inclusion & Equity Policy
- Screening Policy
- Match Support & Supervision Policy
- Match Closure & Graduation Policy
- Privacy & Confidentiality Policy

- Young Person Safety Policy (also known as Child Safety Policy)
- First Aid Policy



## EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, Sparkways will:

- seek feedback from people affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required



## AUTHORISATION

This policy was endorsed by Sparkways on 14 August 2024

**REVIEW DUE:** August 2025

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