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## HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Updated 6 January 2020 by Shannon Hennig, Director

### **Purpose**

Inclusive Communication LTD is committed to ensuring the health and safety of its staff and respecting the appropriate health and safety policies when working on site.

We aim to preserve the long-term health of our staff and those we work with by demonstrating care, aroha, and concern.

We strive to use planning and preparation to minimise risks, leadership and responsiveness to respond to incidents, and to learn as we go.

### **Overview and scope**

At Inclusive Communication, we aim to take reasonable precautions to promote the health and safety of our staff as they carry out their duties. The nature of our community-based service means that we work in a wide range of settings including; our home offices, schools, community centres, medical spheres, residential care, client homes, and the wider community.

When working at an institution, such as a school, we expect our staff to respect the site's health and safety procedures and use common sense. We reserve the right of our staff to protect their own health and safety. Staff are expected to sign in and read the site's health and safety policy if provided. Our health and safety policy is available on our website as well.

### **Risks**

We work in everyday locations with similar levels of risk to health and safety as in everyday life in our region.

Key identified risks include:

- Risks of driving between work sites
- Infectious diseases when working with families, the public, and children
- Natural disasters, specifically earthquakes or tsunamis
- Stress and burnout related to working in an underfunded sector with infinite need
- Physical injuries related to children throwing objects, hitting, biting, jumping on a staff member, etc
- Physical risks of repetitive movements
- Visiting new sites that may have unexpected hazards

### **Risk Management**

Health and safety is everyone's responsibility within the organisation. We expect people to use common sense and consider possible risks.

We plan for and manage the above risks as follows:

- Driving – when driving as part of one’s job
  - Drivers are expected to keep their cars in good working order
  - Seatbelts are to be always used and traffic laws adhered to
  - Cars are expected to carry an emergency kit, first aid kit, working phone, phone charger, and fire extinguisher. This will be provided by Inclusive Communication if needed.
- Infectious diseases
  - Staff are encouraged to wash their hands regularly and carry hand sanitizer
  - Staff are expected to stay home when ill
  - We do not charge a cancellation fee for families cancelling last minute due to illness, this is to discourage home visits when anyone in the family is sick
  - We notify all clients seen before or after a potential infection exposure so they can manage their own risk.
- Natural disasters, specifically earthquakes or tsunamis
  - Staff are provided maps of tsunami evacuation zones
  - Staff are encouraged to visually scan for where to drop and cover in case of earthquake
  - Disaster kits are kept in cars that include water, warm clothes, walking shoes, etc
  - All staff carry phone numbers of who to contact in case of becoming stranded.
- Stress and burnout related to working in an underfunded sector with infinite need
  - All staff working with clients are provided professional supervision
  - Sick leave is monitored, and we review hours and stress levels
  - All staff are expected to take annual leave
  - All staff are expected to schedule meal and regular breaks during their work day in a way that works for their body and mind
- Physical injuries related to children throwing objects, hitting, biting, jumping on a staff member, etc
  - Staff are well trained regarding how to read nonverbal signs of agitation, confusion, and other signs of possible aggression
  - Staff are trained to monitor the physiological arousal levels of clients and strive to help clients stay in a well regulated state
  - De-escalation techniques are a key part of our clinical practice
  - We use our years of experience with children and people with disabilities to help predict, plan, and react as safely as possible while maintaining a balance between risk prevention and clinical benefit.
- Ergonomics
  - If we are working for more than 15 minutes using computer technology, we seek out an appropriate ergonomic set up
  - When driving, pausing to stretch every 90 minutes is encouraged.
- Visiting new sites
  - Staff are expected to monitor for potential hazards for themselves and the people around them whenever visiting a different site
  - Staff are supported if they leave a site due to health or safety concerns
  - Staff are supported if they need to minimise or avoid specific locations due to emotional hazards (i.e., abusive, threatening or bullying people), physical hazards (e.g., unexpected dangers at a person’s home e.g. dangerous dogs, etc), or

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environmental hazards (e.g., second hand smoke, mold, unsecured poisons, allergens, etc).

We will achieve this through:

- making health and safety a key part of our role
- working as a team to improve the health and safety system at our schools
- doing everything reasonably possible to remove or reduce the risk of injury or illness
- making sure all incidents, injuries and near misses are recorded in the appropriate place
- investigating incidents, near misses and reducing the likelihood of them happening again
- having emergency plans and procedures in place
- training everyone about hazards and risks so everyone can work safely
- providing appropriate induction, training and supervision for all new and existing workers
- helping workers who were injured or ill return to work safely.

All workers are encouraged to play a vital and responsible role in maintaining a safe and healthy workplace through:

- being involved in improving health and safety systems at work
- following all instructions, rules, procedures and safe ways of working
- reporting any pain or discomfort as soon as possible

### **Reporting procedures**

Incidents are reported to the Director who will enter the following details into the incident log:

- Date / Time
- Location
- Who was involved
- What happened
- Was it a near miss, incident, illness, etc
- What actions were taken at the time
- What needs to happen next (e.g., do we need to notify anyone?)
- Do we need to update procedures or policies.

Additional logs are maintained for training, updates to this policy, and notifiable events.

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