SIDEMISSION SOCIAL

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

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Document owner: David Robinette and Elaine Bell

Applies to: Directors, employees, volunteers, sessional workers, contractors and anyone delivering activities on behalf of Side Mission Social

Review frequency: Annually, or following a significant incident or change in activities

Purpose

Side Mission Social is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for participants, staff, volunteers, visitors and anyone affected by its activities.

We will take reasonable and proportionate steps to prevent accidents, reduce risks and ensure activities are planned and delivered safely.

Health and safety will be considered across all our work, including creative and digital sessions, music production and DJing, events, workshops, trips and community activities.

Responsibilities

The directors are responsible for ensuring suitable health and safety arrangements are in place, appropriate risk assessments are completed, and necessary resources, information and training are provided.

Session leaders are responsible for checking that activities and venues are safe, participants understand relevant safety instructions, equipment is used appropriately and concerns are acted upon.

Staff and volunteers must follow safety procedures, use equipment responsibly, report hazards and incidents promptly, and never knowingly put themselves or others at unnecessary risk.

Participants will be encouraged to follow instructions, treat others respectfully and use facilities and equipment safely.

Risk assessments

Risk assessments will be completed where appropriate before activities begin and reviewed when circumstances change.

They will consider the activity, venue, equipment, age and needs of participants, staffing and supervision, accessibility, emergency arrangements and any foreseeable hazards.

Additional assessments will be considered for higher-risk activities, off-site visits, events, equipment use and activities involving significant physical movement.

Identified risks will be reduced through suitable controls, clear instructions, appropriate supervision and safe working practices.

Activities must be changed, postponed or stopped if risks cannot be controlled adequately.

Premises and venues

Activities will take place in venues considered suitable for their intended use.

Before sessions begin, the responsible person will consider access and exits, fire safety arrangements, trip hazards, lighting, ventilation, toilet facilities, accessibility and any relevant restrictions on the venue.

Any obvious hazards must be addressed before participants use the space.

Where another organisation manages the premises, Side Mission Social will establish relevant site rules and emergency arrangements with the venue operator.

Equipment and safe working practices

Equipment must be suitable for its intended use, maintained in safe condition and used in accordance with relevant instructions.

This includes computers, laptops, screens, cables, DJ equipment, speakers, electrical devices, creative tools and any specialist equipment used during activities.

Damaged or potentially unsafe equipment must be taken out of use and reported to the session leader.

Cables must be positioned to minimise trip hazards. Electrical sockets must not be overloaded, and equipment must not be used where there is a risk of electric shock, overheating or other harm.

Participants must receive appropriate instruction before using unfamiliar equipment.

Music, creative and digital activities

Activities involving music equipment, amplified sound, physical movement or specialist creative tools must be planned with the relevant risks in mind.

Noise levels and exposure time must be managed appropriately, particularly during extended music sessions or events.

Volume should be kept at a reasonable level, and hearing protection or other controls considered where needed.

Computer workstations should be arranged to support safe and comfortable use, with suitable breaks during longer sessions.

Any tools, machinery or equipment presenting additional risks must only be used where appropriate controls, instruction and supervision are in place.

Supervision and participant safety

Activities must have suitable staffing and supervision arrangements based on the number, ages and needs of participants and the nature of the activity.

Staff must understand their responsibilities and know how to summon assistance in an emergency.

Participants must be given clear instructions about safe conduct, equipment use, venue boundaries and any activity-specific restrictions.

Any participant whose behaviour creates an immediate safety risk must be supported and managed in a proportionate way. Activities may be paused or stopped if necessary.

Safeguarding concerns must also be handled in accordance with the Side Mission Social Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

First aid, accidents and incidents

Suitable first aid arrangements will be considered for each venue and activity.

Staff must know how to access first aid assistance and emergency services.

All accidents, injuries, near misses and significant safety concerns must be reported promptly to the session leader or responsible person and recorded using the organisation's approved reporting process.

Serious incidents must be escalated immediately. Where necessary, emergency services must be contacted.

The directors will review incidents and near misses to identify lessons and consider whether further action is needed.

Fire safety and emergencies

Staff and volunteers must familiarise themselves with the venue's fire procedures, alarm arrangements, escape routes and assembly point.

Participants must be told what to do in an emergency where appropriate.

Escape routes and exits must remain clear.

If a fire alarm sounds or evacuation is required, staff must follow the venue's emergency procedures, guide participants to safety where possible and report to the designated assembly point.

No one should re-enter the building until authorised to do so.

Other emergencies, including serious injury, power failure or an unsafe venue, must be managed according to the circumstances, with emergency services contacted where required.

Hygiene, welfare and wellbeing

Side Mission Social will take reasonable steps to maintain clean, suitable working and activity spaces.

Staff must consider access to drinking water, toilet facilities, ventilation and breaks appropriate to the activity.

Food and refreshments, where provided, must be handled safely and any relevant allergies or dietary requirements considered.

Activities should be planned to avoid unnecessary physical or emotional strain. Participants must be able to raise concerns and request help where needed.

Off-site activities and events

Off-site activities, trips and events must be planned in advance, with appropriate consideration given to transport, venue suitability, supervision, accessibility, emergency contacts and foreseeable hazards.

A responsible leader must be identified for each activity.

Participants must receive relevant safety instructions and know how to contact a member of staff if they become separated from the group or need assistance.

Activities must be adjusted or cancelled where weather, venue conditions, staffing or other circumstances make them unsafe.

Reporting hazards and raising concerns

Everyone involved with Side Mission Social is encouraged to report hazards, unsafe practices, damaged equipment and any other health and safety concerns.

Reports must be taken seriously and acted upon promptly.

No one should be discouraged from raising a genuine safety concern.

Where a serious or immediate risk is identified, the affected activity or equipment must be stopped or taken out of use until it is safe to proceed.

Training and information

Staff and volunteers will receive health and safety information appropriate to their responsibilities.

Additional instruction or training will be provided where required by the activity, equipment or level of risk.

The directors will ensure that relevant policies, risk assessments and emergency arrangements are accessible to those who need them.

Monitoring and review

The directors will monitor health and safety arrangements, review reported incidents and consider whether existing controls remain suitable.

This policy will be reviewed annually, following a significant incident, or when changes to the organisation's activities or relevant requirements make a review necessary.

Approved By: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Review Date: _____