

Applies to	All Intereach workers. For the purpose of this document, the term “Worker” applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors, students, Directors and Family Day Care (FDC) Educators.				
Version	6.0	Date approved	9/2/2024	Next review date	9/2/2027

1. Policy Statement

Intereach champions the words of the [United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#):

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights; without distinction of any kind”.

We are committed to embedding human rights standards in alignment with the 30 rights outlined by this Declaration of Human Rights and empower our employees, people using our services and community members who interact with Intereach by ensuring they:

- are treated with respect;
- do not encounter discrimination based on their status;
- are safe from sexual harassment;
- experience a safe and secure environment;
- have their privacy and confidentiality maintained;
- are provided with clear and accessible information about services, including any fees;
- are actively encouraged to contribute to decision-making around services and issues that affect them;
- are appropriately supported and represented by an advocate if needed, and;
- are informed of their rights and avenues to provide feedback about our services.

It is our expectation that all those who engage with Intereach maintain the same commitment to Human Rights in their interactions with our workers.

2. Objective

The objective of this policy is to:

- provide clear direction on key human rights-based practices to create an environment where human rights are upheld and respected; and,
- ensure our operations avoids infringing on the human rights of others.

3. Definitions

- **Discrimination:** Discrimination is any form of less favourable treatment of an individual or group of individuals (including harassment and sexual harassment) based on their protected attributes, such as but not limited to:
 - gender or transgender status;
 - sex;
 - sexual orientation;
 - ethnic, cultural or racial background, including but not limited to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage;
 - pregnancy and breastfeeding;
 - marital or domestic status;
 - parental status or family or carer responsibilities;
 - religious or political beliefs;
 - profession, trade or occupation;
 - union membership;
 - physical, mental, intellectual or psychiatric disability;

- medical record;
- age;
- physical appearance (including height, weight, size or other body characteristics); or,
- Personal association with anyone who has any of these characteristics.
- **Human rights:** Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, without distinction of any kind, such as:
 - race;
 - colour;
 - sex;
 - language;
 - religion;
 - political or other opinion;
 - national or social origin;
 - property;
 - birth; or,
 - other status.

4. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Co-CEOs and General Managers to:

- ensure that organisational systems, practices and behaviours support a human rights-based approach;
- induction and training is delivered to employees that encompasses a human rights-based approach;
- ensure that program and service design and delivery, respects, recognises and supports human rights;
- Identify and assess the current and potential impacts and risks to human rights in association with service delivery; and,
- take proactive and meaningful action to prevent workplace sexual harassment, sex discrimination and sex-based harassment.

It is the responsibility of managers to:

- monitor and maintain equity of access to programs, services and service information.

It is the responsibility of workers to:

- treat all people they work with dignity, courtesy and respect;
- not discriminate, or support others to discriminate, against individuals or groups;
- participate in training and professional development activities to improve and maintain an understanding of human rights-based practice;
- address and respond to observed incidents of sexual harassment or if they hear that it has occurred;
- encourage service users to participate equitably in decision-making, where possible; and,
- maintain privacy and confidentiality in accordance with the Intereach Privacy Policy.

5. Policy

Our commitment to Human Rights is incorporated into everything we do from our Values and Intereach Fundamentals to our organisational documents and service delivery.

- All employees are trained in Human Rights at induction.
- A summary statement of our Human Rights Policy is displayed in all offices.

- Information about people's rights is provided on engagement with our services.

Intereach applies the following strategies to our participants and workers to uphold our commitment to Human Rights.

5.1. Human rights-based approach

We recognise human rights as those defined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A human rights approach empowers people to know and claim their rights and increases the ability and accountability of individuals and institutions. This means giving people greater opportunities to participate in shaping the decisions that affect their human rights. All activities undertaken at Intereach are underpinned by a human rights-based approach that rests on the five key human rights principles of:

- participation;
- accountability;
- non-discrimination, equality and attention to vulnerable groups;
- empowerment; and,
- linkages to human rights standards and the progressive and sustained realisation of rights.

5.2. Person-centred approach

A person-centred approach acknowledges that working equitably with people requires an equal partnership where individuals are supported to have a say in decisions that directly affect them. A person-centred approach supports human rights by promoting participation and minimising opportunities for discrimination and exclusion by ensuring individuals are listened to and supported based on their strength, abilities, aspirations and preferences. For more information, refer to the Intereach Working with People Practice Manual.

5.3. Discrimination-free practice

Intereach is committed to a Human Rights approach which ensures that our practices and behaviours are free from discrimination and where all people are treated fairly and equally. Our policies, processes and practices promote inclusion, diversity and equal opportunity. Discrimination can be by direct action or indirect through exclusionary policy and practice.

Intereach commits to support discrimination-free practice by:

- promoting a discrimination-free workplace which ensures employees and prospective employees are supported and not adversely affected because of a protected attribute;
- ensuring fair and equitable access to all programs, services and supports offered. Intereach commits to ensuring no person will be denied access to appropriate supports and services based on discrimination of a protected attribute; and,
- addressing Issues and complaints related to the human rights of service users and workers fairly, promptly and transparently.

5.4. Inclusion of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

People who are culturally diverse, such as people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds including those who are recent migrants, can be vulnerable to direct and indirect discrimination and exclusion from services and access to information. We aim to ensure Intereach services, activities and systems are culturally accessible by:

- implementing Intereach's Inclusion Action Plan which details Intereach's vision and commitment to Inclusion, for example:

- understanding the cultural diversity of the communities where we work, and barriers to inclusion, through population and service data, consultation with culturally diverse groups and individuals and involvement with community groups and activities;
- providing service information, including surveys, posters, flyers and brochures, in relevant languages;
- recognising, observing and participating in national and local cultural celebrations and activities;
- ensuring signage and office design promotes cultural inclusion; and,
- organising interpreters where available and where needed.

5.5. Inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can be vulnerable to direct and indirect discrimination and exclusion from services and access to information.

We aim to ensure Intereach services, activities and systems are culturally accessible by implementing our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan which details Intereach's vision and commitment to Reconciliation, for example:

- understanding the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the communities where we work and barriers to their inclusion through population and service data, consultation with Aboriginal groups and individuals and involvement with Aboriginal groups and activities;
- providing service information, including surveys, posters, flyers and brochures, using language and images relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- recognising, observing and participating in national and local cultural celebrations and activities; and,
- ensuring signage and office design is welcoming and promotes the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

5.6. Inclusion and Accessibility for persons with disabilities

People with disabilities can be vulnerable to direct and indirect discrimination and exclusion from services and information. Indirect discrimination can include office design that limits equitable access and written publications and documents that cannot be read or accessed by a person with a disability.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is an international human rights convention which sets out the fundamental human rights of people with disability. We aim to ensure Intereach services, activities and systems are in alignment with the CRPD and the guiding principles and are accessible to people with disabilities by implementing Intereach's Inclusion Action Plan which details Intereach's vision and commitment to Inclusion, for example:

- ensuring that office design allows for equitable access for community members and employees with physical, speech or sensory, psychiatric and intellectual disabilities;
- providing service information, including surveys, posters, flyers and brochures, in accessible formats (see the Style Guide for more information), such as:
 - accessible PDF and Word documents, and,
 - large print and Easy English versions.
- ensuring the Intereach website complies, where practicable, with Level AA checkpoints from the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.01
- understanding the diversity of the communities where we work and barriers to inclusion through population and service data, consultation with disability groups and individuals with disability and involvement with community activities;

- recognising, observing and participating in national and local celebrations and activities;
- providing access to Teletypewriter and Speak and Listen communication services and,
- accessibility enhancements in all training provided.

5.7. Inclusion of people who are gender and sexuality diverse

People who are gender and sexuality diverse, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and non-binary people (LGBTQIA+), can be vulnerable to direct and indirect discrimination and exclusion from services.

We aim to ensure Intereach services, activities and systems are inclusive of people who identify as LGBTQIA+ by implementing [Intereach's Inclusion Action Plan](#) which details Intereach's vision and commitment to Inclusion, for example:

- understanding the diversity of the communities where we work and barriers to inclusion through consultation with LGBTQIA+ groups and individuals and involvement with community groups and activities;
- encourage staff to participate in events, activities, online forums etc which recognise and celebrate LGBTQIA+ pride in our local communities; and,
- ensuring signage, office design and policies support the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ people.

5.8. Consideration the rights of all ages

Intereach commits to providing fair and equitable services across its footprint and has tailored service delivery programs which support age groups ranging from birth to end of life. People receiving services from us will also be provided with relevant documentation regarding their rights as per the program and legislative requirement, for example:

- The Australian Government Department of Health, Charter of Aged Care Rights as per the Aged Care Act 1997, [Schedule 1 User Rights Principles 2014](#) or;
- Human Rights Policy, or;
- Rights, Privacy and Complaints Brochure, or;
- Children and parents joining our program/s will receive information on Child Protection. which may include a copy of the Child Safe Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct and Complaint Policy.

We adopt a variety of training and communication strategies within our services to ensure child safe expectations are practiced and understood by our workers.

6. Context	
6.1. Standards or other external requirements	<p>Aged Care Quality Standards National Quality Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Aged Care Child Safe Standards Vic and NSW Charter of Aged Care Rights Schedule 1 User Rights Principles 2014 Website Content Accessibility Guidelines United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</p>
6.2. Legislation or other requirements	<p>Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011 Clause 155 (Cth) Aged Care Act 1997 (Cth) Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW) Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) Racial Hatred Act, 1995 (Cth) Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth) Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic) Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic) Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth) Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) Work Health and Safety Act 2011 Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth) Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) Privacy & Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW) Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic) Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)</p>
6.3. Reference Internal documents	<p>Code of Conduct Policy Complaint Policy Privacy Policy People and Culture Framework Working with People Practice Manual Style Guide Child Protection Procedure Anti Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy Child Safe Policy Child Safe Code of Conduct</p>

7. Document control			
Version	Date approved	Approved by	Next review date
1.0	August 2010	Executive Team	August 2013
2.0	October 2013	Leadership Group	October 2016
3.0	August 2016	Leadership Group	August 2019
4.0	June 2017	Combined Leadership Group	June 2020
5.0	13 October 2021	Leadership Group	13 October 2024
6.0	9 February 2024	Quality Governance Group	9 February 2027