CHILD SAFE POLICY

In training for Group Ecotherapy, we are aware of the Childsafe Standards Nationally/in our region. They will differ across the world, and they are important to maintain an ethical basis for our work. The following 10 standards need to be embedded in the leadership, governance and culture of Ecotherapy.

Here is a general statement of aims, from the implementation guide;

A child safe culture is a set of values and practices that guide the attitudes and behaviour of all staff. Good leaders champion these values and embed them in organisational governance. The following values should be at the heart of any approach that prioritises children’s safety: • The best interests of children and their protection from harm is paramount. • Child abuse is not tolerated and must not happen. • Children’s rights are understood and respected. • Concerns about child safety raised by children and their parents and carers are acted on. • Reporting abuse is not obstructed or prevented.

Guided by the Childsafe Standards NSW Australia, Eartheart Ecotherapy has produced the following draft policy, to be reviewed formally every 2 years, and informally in an ongoing, embedded culture of Ecotherapy that is committed to keeping children and all its participants emotionally, physically and spiritually safe.

The Childsafe Standards of NSW Australia are used as a guide, for International students. Eartheart Ecotherapy students are educated and encouraged to embed Childsafe practices into the culture of Ecotherapy in the following ways:

1. Students become aware of Childsafe Standards in the introduction to the course, before the first Module is begun, in the clear setting out ethical practise of Ecotherapy guidelines.

2. All students are required to obtain a Working with Children check or its international equivalent, before facilitating in Ecotherapy groups as students or practitioners. This is checked by facilitator before Module 4 and 9 is commenced, which are where
practise groups are facilitated. This also applies to the student residential, where Ecotherapy is offered to the community.

3. All students are aware of the laws around mandatory reporting procedures, of children at significant risk of harm.

4. Trauma sensitive practices are studied throughout the course, as a way of working effectively with those who have suffered from child abuse, but also as a way of upholding Childsafe Standards, through education of prevention of trauma. One of the principles of trauma informed practise, is an understanding of social context. This means having an understating of the dynamics of power, and how this might play out at any given moment, and the impacts of this on children.

5. A rigorous ethos of decolonising the human and Nature split, which also deconstructs power and hegemony in institutions including education, explores ways to recognise resist and heal from these processes individually and collectively. A large motivation for this is to keep children safe from all forms of abuse.

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