

# WE PUT PEOPLE FIRST

Our view of client  
safety and wellbeing

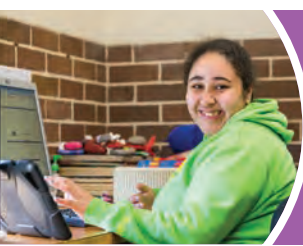


# OUR VALUES



## **BELONGING**

We know that a sense of inclusion is critical to wellbeing. We value culture, community and two-way communication.



## **CHOICE**

We understand that choice is a fundamental human right and support the right to exercise choice and control at all times.



## **CONTRIBUTION**

We work with others and value their input as we believe this builds stronger communities and networks to support individuals to achieve their goals.



## **RESPECT**

We honour diversity and difference; through active listening we support our Participants and each other to make choices that are right for their individual circumstances.



## **SAFETY**

We ensure the physical safety and health of our Participants and each other as a priority.

# AT SYLVANVALE WE ALL SHARE THE **RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLIENT SAFETY**

Every day, Sylvanvale offers support to adults and children with disability. We want each and every one of our clients to feel safe and respected.

We all have a responsibility to make sure that safety comes first, and that clients receive good care at all times.



# WE PUT PEOPLE FIRST

## Our position on client safety and wellbeing

At Sylvanvale, the wellbeing of the people we support is our greatest concern. Ensuring clients are supported and free from abuse and neglect is an absolute, non-negotiable priority.

This is about giving people the respect they deserve. We expect the entire Sylvanvale community to take positive action and responsibility for a key aspect of wellbeing – the safety of clients who access our services.

### **WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM SYLVANVALE**

Careful attention to what is happening with and around clients is an important way to keep them safe. Rather than dealing with problems after they've already occurred, we want to create an environment where clients are not put at risk.

Clearly expressing what is not appropriate behaviour is the first step towards achieving this.

Sylvanvale will not accept any behaviour that contravenes these guidelines.

### **WHAT WE EXPECT FROM WORKERS**

Sylvanvale expects workers to act in a way that prioritises the wellbeing of clients at all times. To do this, we expect workers to have a clear understanding of what constitutes illegal, unacceptable, and concerning behaviour in relation to the people they support.

We make it clear to workers what we expect of them in their dealings with clients. This will allow workers to identify and draw attention to behaviours which steps beyond these boundaries – even if it's a close friend, colleague, or senior person within our organisation.

### **If workers become aware of any kind of concerning behaviour they must raise it with their manager.**

Remember that this is all part of ensuring that clients are respected, listened to, and safe.

## **TALKING ABOUT ABUSE**

We're not afraid to say it directly – abuse is a risk in an organisation like ours. One of the ways to guard against abuse and the reluctance to report it is to talk about it openly. So while we understand it's a difficult topic, we're willing to confront it head on.

With an evidence-informed, proactive and positive approach, we're helping everyone to acknowledge and understand what abuse is.

## **UNDERSTANDING THE BOUNDARIES**

This is not intended to create an environment of suspicion, or a culture where workers feel they have to watch each other, but is designed to keep Sylanvale clients safe.

Appropriate boundaries must be well understood and respected. This booklet assists people to have a clear understanding of what is and isn't acceptable behaviour in relation to clients.



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THAT'S WHY WE  
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SYLVANVALE  
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**POSITIVE  
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RESPONSIBILITY  
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WELLBEING –  
THE SAFETY OF  
ALL OUR CLIENTS**



# OFF LIMITS

## Illegal behaviour in relation to providing supports to clients

There are many acts that are illegal, and the police will be notified if anyone is suspected of committing one of these offences. Many of these acts are also reportable to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and will be investigated by Sylvanvale.

**Sexual offences** – sexual contact of any sort with a client by a worker is not allowed, even if there is consent.

To make it clear this includes, but is not limited to, having or attempting to have any kind of sexual activity with a client or in front of a client. Sexual activity also includes things like sex; nudity, pornography; prostitution; sexting, taking photos of genitals or breast areas or sharing sexual images.

**Physical assault** – it's never ok to touch a client in a forceful or violent way. Physical assault includes hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, pinching, pushing or throwing objects at or using an object to hit a client.

**There are other types of illegal behaviour** – these include providing illegal drugs to a client, or medications that have not been prescribed for them.

**Money** – it's illegal to steal money, possessions or government assistance from a client. Workers cannot use a client's money for any purpose. This includes borrowing money even if they intend to pay it back.

### THE CONSEQUENCES OF ILLEGAL BEHAVIOUR

The Police will deal with illegal behaviour as a criminal matter. Sylvanvale has responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of clients. Workers will be terminated if they are found to have engaged in any illegal behaviour in relation to providing support to clients.

# BEYOND THE LIMITS

## Unacceptable behaviour in relation to people we support

Some acts are not directly seen as illegal, but are unacceptable for workers who should have the care and welfare of people with disability as their highest priority.

This includes:

**Sexual misconduct** – it's not acceptable for workers to share details of their own relationships or sexual experiences with clients or people at work.

Sometimes, workers can talk to clients about sex in a way that helps educate or guide them, but they must not talk about their own experiences.

**Crossing boundaries** – this includes workers having personal or intimate relationships with clients. Taking clients to a worker's house or to the house of their friend or family. Seeing clients outside of work when there's no existing and disclosed relationship (such as a family connection already identified as a potential conflict of interest).

Workers should not share personal phone numbers with clients, engage with them through personal social media accounts, or ask them to keep a relationship secret.

Workers are expected to respect the privacy of clients when they're using

the bathroom or changing clothes.

**Grooming** – this is behaviour that often prepares a client for sexual activity, and will regularly involve some of the elements described in crossing boundaries. Depending on the degree, grooming may also constitute illegal behaviour.

**Neglect** – all clients require and deserve the best support possible. Neglect is often shown by failing to adequately support or supervise a client, leaving them alone for long periods, or leaving them in the care of another client. Allegations of neglect are always reviewed by Sylvanvale. In certain circumstances, neglect may be treated as a criminal matter.

**Visitors** – workers should not invite personal visitors (for example their friends) to a Sylvanvale site or visit friends or relatives while supporting a client.

**Ill-treatment** – some types of unacceptable behaviour leave no obvious physical marks on a client but can cause serious emotional



damage. This includes (deliberately or otherwise) making worse an existing psychological condition, using bad language, calling a person names, cruelty or cruel treatment.

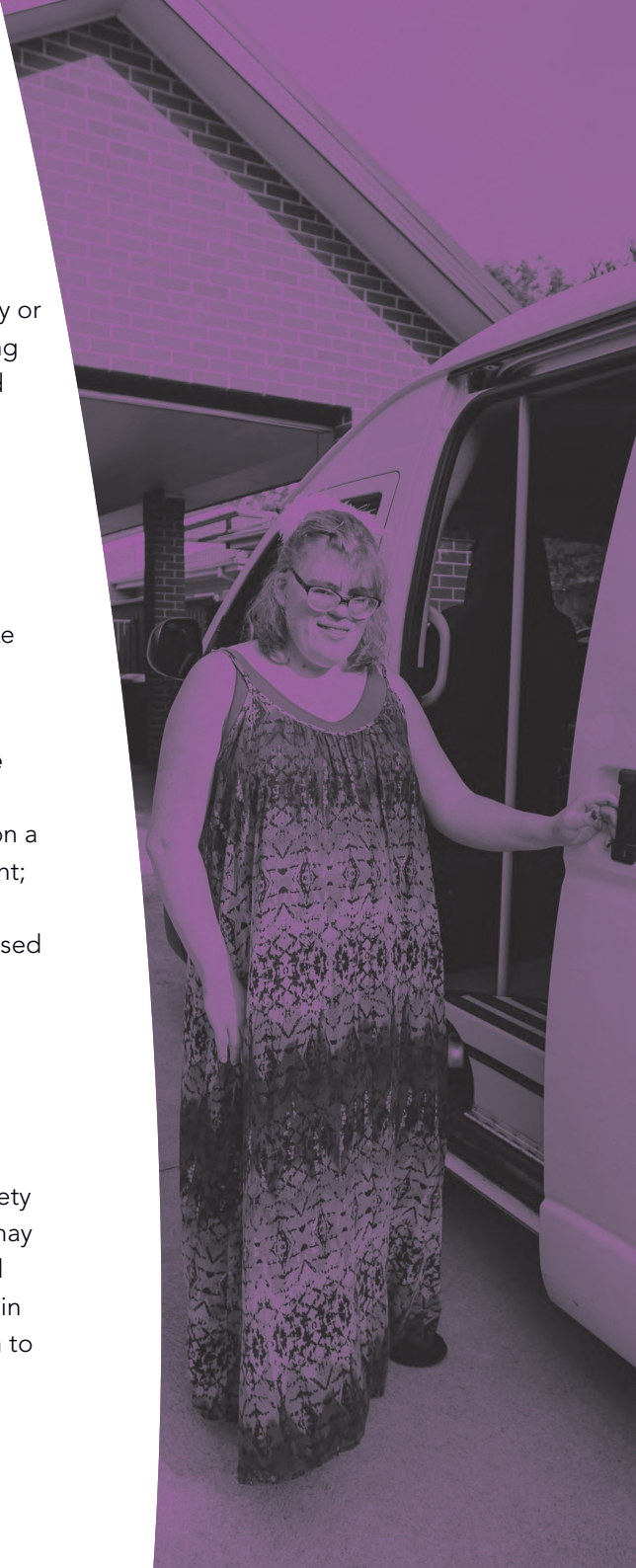
**Alcohol** – workers must not be affected by alcohol or drugs while providing supports to clients.

**Smoking** – workers must not smoke in front of or with clients, or on a Sylvanvale site.

**Other examples of unacceptable behaviour** – this includes being in the same bed as a client, or lying on a couch or other furniture with a client; sleeping naked while working in a Sylvanvale service; using unauthorised or prohibited restrictive practices; bullying; or a failure to respect the privacy of clients.

## **THE CONSEQUENCES OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR**

Given our responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of clients, workers may have their employment terminated if they are found to have engaged in unacceptable behaviour in relation to clients we support.



# CAUSE FOR CONCERN

## Behaviour that makes us worried

When it comes to supporting people with disability, context is everything. So while the behaviour described in this section is not illegal or unacceptable, it can be of concern. This is mainly because it can easily cross boundaries and become grooming for sexual activity.

**Concerning behaviour** includes workers using clients to meet their emotional needs by talking about themselves, showing favour to one person over another, providing gifts, being secretive about giving a gift or unnecessarily sharing details of your personal life. Workers wearing inappropriate clothing can also be considered concerning behaviour. This type of clothing might expose or emphasise the genitals or breasts, or feature sexist or racist language or images.

**Failure to support a client** includes not providing active support, sleeping on a day time or awake night shift, or ignoring a client or their needs.

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS BEHAVIOUR

We'll always be on the lookout for concerning behaviour, and will closely examine what happened and take action if required when it comes to our attention.



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EVERY DAY, SYLVANVALE OFFERS SUPPORT AND CARE TO ADULTS AND CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY.

**WE WANT EACH AND EVERY ONE OF OUR CLIENTS TO FEEL SAFE AND RESPECTED**

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WE ALL SHARE  
RESPONSIBILITY  
**FOR THE  
CLIENTS  
WHO  
ENGAGE  
WITH  
SYLVANVALE**



# ALL WORKERS ARE ACCOUNTABLE

Sylvanvale workers do important and valuable work every day – work that’s appreciated by everyone across the organisation and the wider community. However, their position is one of great responsibility. This means workers must act in the best interests of the clients they support at all times, and they will be held accountable if their behaviour does not meet the expected standards.

We all share the responsibility for the people with disability who are or become our clients. This means we are accountable for our own behaviour, and for noticing and acting upon the concerning behaviour of others.

If anyone notices any of the behaviours described in this booklet they must raise this with a manager.

Any information you share will be evaluated responsibly, carefully and with consideration to your privacy. You will be supported and treated with respect when you provide information in relation to the safety of Sylvanvale clients.

# LET'S TALK

Any client or other person can make a complaint directly with Sylvanvale.

How To Contact Us:



**Email** customers@sylvanvale.com.au



**Call** 1300 244 577



**Visit** 2 Mikarie Place, Kirrawee NSW



**Post** PO Box 29 Sutherland NSW 1499

Feedback can also be lodged via the Sylvanvale website:



**[sylvanvale.com.au/contact](https://sylvanvale.com.au/contact)**

- Click on the 'Feedback and Complaints Form'
- Complete the form with as much detail as possible
- Your feedback will be passed on to the **Service Planning** Team

If after you have contacted us you remain dissatisfied following a previous complaint, the following organisations may be able to assist you.

## **NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission**

Level 1, 121 Henry Street, Penrith NSW 2750

PO Box 210, Penrith NSW 2750

Phone: 1800 035 544

TTY: 133 677

[www.ndiscommission.gov.au](http://www.ndiscommission.gov.au)

## **NSW Ageing & Disability Commission**

Level 6, 93 George Street

Parramatta NSW 2150

Phone: 1800 628 221

Email: [nswadc@adc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nswadc@adc.nsw.gov.au)

[www.ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au)

**Anti-Discrimination NSW**

Level 7, 10 Valentine Ave,  
Parramatta NSW 2150  
PO Box W213,  
Parramatta Westfield NSW 2150  
Phone: (02) 9268 5544  
TTY: (02) 9268 5522  
Fax: (02) 9268 5500  
Email: [complaintsadb@justice.nsw.gov.au](mailto:complaintsadb@justice.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.antidiscrimination.nsw.gov.au](http://www.antidiscrimination.nsw.gov.au)

**Australian Human Rights Commission**

Level 3, 175 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW 2000  
GPO Box 5218, SYDNEY NSW 2001  
Phone: (02) 9284 9888  
Complaints Infoline: 1300 656 419  
TTY: 1800 620 241  
Fax: (02) 9284 9611  
Email: [infoservice@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:infoservice@humanrights.gov.au)  
[www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)

**Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)**

Locked Bag 10, Strawberry Hills NSW  
2012  
Phone: 02 9377 6000  
[www.dcj.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dcj.nsw.gov.au)

**Intellectual Disability Rights Service (IDRS)**

Suite 204, 370 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW  
2000  
PO Box 3347, Redfern NSW 2016  
Phone: (02) 9265 6300  
Toll Free: 1300 665 908  
Fax: (02) 9265 6333  
Email: [info@idrs.org.au](mailto:info@idrs.org.au)  
[www.idrs.org.au](http://www.idrs.org.au)

**Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association (MDAA)**

10-12 Hutchinson St, Granville NSW  
2142  
PO Box 884 Granville NSW 2142  
Toll Free Phone: 1800 629 072  
Email: [madaa@madaa.org.au](mailto:madaa@madaa.org.au)  
[www.mdaa.org.au](http://www.mdaa.org.au)

**People With Disability Australia**

Level 8, 418A Elizabeth Street,  
Surry Hills NSW 2010  
PO Box 666, Strawberry Hills NSW 2012  
Phone: 02 9370 3100  
Toll Free: 1800 422 015  
TTY: (02) 9318 2138 TTY  
Toll Free: 1800 422 016  
Fax: (02) 9318 1372  
Email: [pwd@pwd.org.au](mailto:pwd@pwd.org.au)  
[www.pwd.org.au](http://www.pwd.org.au)

 [www.facebook.com/sylvanvale](http://www.facebook.com/sylvanvale)

 [www.youtube.com/sylvantube](http://www.youtube.com/sylvantube)

 [www.instagram.com/sylvanvale](http://www.instagram.com/sylvanvale)

 [www.linkedin.com/company/sylvanvale](http://www.linkedin.com/company/sylvanvale)



[sylvanvale.com.au](http://sylvanvale.com.au)



For people with  
hearing or speech loss

TTY: 1800 555 677

Speak and Listen: 1800 555 727



For people who  
need help with English

TIS: 131 450

Find out more at  
[www.sylvanvale.com.au](http://www.sylvanvale.com.au)

T 1300 244 577

E [contactus@sylvanvale.com.au](mailto:contactus@sylvanvale.com.au)

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