

# FAMILY PLANNING NSW

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S REPRODUCTIVE AND SEXUAL HEALTH POLICY



### POLICY STATEMENT

Family Planning NSW (FPNSW) recognises that young people have the right to decide freely on all matters related to their sexuality without coercion, discrimination and violence. This encompasses people's right to explore their own sexuality free from shame, fear and guilt.

FPNSW is committed to ensuring young people have access to the information and support they need to achieve optimal reproductive and sexual health and wellbeing.

This policy provides the rationale for developing a safe, non-judgemental and sex positive environment that provides the best possible reproductive and sexual health outcomes for young people. Further recommendations for practical application of this policy can be found in the FPNSW Guidelines for Working with Young People.

FPNSW recognises that "sexual health is a state of physical, mental and social wellbeing in relation to sexuality. It requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence." (World Health Organisation)

FPNSW's work with young people is aligned with the:

- NSW Youth Health Framework
- NSW Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy

### SCOPE

All staff

### POLICY DETAILS

#### Family Planning NSW recognises that

- youth is a period of emerging sexuality and sexual relationships; FPNSW adopts an approach to addressing equality and equity and is informed by its general policy on human sexuality. (Refer FPNSW Sexuality Policy)
- young people have particular reproductive and sexual health needs associated with their biological and social development

- young people's sexuality and sexual health concerns are negotiated in widely differing cultural and socio-economic circumstances
- all young people need information on reproductive and sexual health regardless of whether they are sexually active or not
- young people often have inadequate knowledge about how and where to seek help for their health concerns and issues regarding the confidentiality of their consultation
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) health issues, unhealthy relationships, unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmissible infections (STIs) among young people are significant sexual health concerns
- there are substantial gender differences between young women, men and gender diverse people in the area of sexuality and sexual health, which must be addressed in the provision of appropriate sexual health education and services
- young people may have limited awareness of the harm associated with risk behaviours, and the skills to keep themselves safe
- young people often engage in health risk behaviours such as drug and alcohol use that reflect the adolescent developmental processes of experimentation and exploration
- young people are a high risk group in regards to sexual health, with epidemiological data showing a higher prevalence of STIs, lower rates of condom use and barriers to accessing health services
- drugs and alcohol may impact on young people's ability to negotiate sexual intimacy, including their ability to consent to sex and use safe sex practices

#### Family Planning NSW believes

- all young people have a right to access reproductive and sexual health services and programs that are affordable, respectful and maintain appropriate client confidentiality

- young people have the right to high quality sexual and reproductive health education, information and clinical services that assist them to attain sexual health and well-being, including whether to be sexually active or not, and to practise safe sex in order to prevent unplanned pregnancies and STIs
- reproductive and sexual health education and promotion within schools should be well resourced, monitored and accompanied by training for teachers
- the diversity of sub-populations of young people in the community need to be addressed and included in the planning and delivery of reproductive and sexual health education, information and clinical services
- peer education/youth participation is an effective means of informing young people about sexual health because of the educators' connection to and understanding of reproductive and sexual health issues for young people
- engaging young people in planning and decision making will result in better services and programs for young people
- ensuring we provide a welcoming and inclusive environment that is trauma-informed, respectful and inclusive of cultural, sexual and gender diversity to ensure that young people feel comfortable discussing and seeking advice about their sexual health
- advocating for the implementation of child protection strategies and education within schools as an important means of addressing issues of sexual assault and violence against children and young people
- supporting FPNSW staff to access resources, tools and professional learning to enhance their knowledge and capacity to deliver and promote reproductive and sexual health programs and information to young people
- providing free access to condoms and other materials and the information required to use them effectively as per the FPNSW Condom Distribution Procedure

#### **Family Planning NSW is committed to**

- advocating for the reproductive and sexual rights of young people
- focusing on a sex-positive approach that focuses on life-enhancing and pleasurable aspects of sexuality and not just the risks
- actively seeking the views of young people who use our services or could potentially use our services to advise, support and offer recommendations
- providing relevant reproductive and sexual health education and resources for young people which support them to develop health-sustaining knowledge and skills
- working in partnership with schools, health providers and other relevant service providers to enhance access to information regarding reproductive and sexual health services available to young people
- providing accessible, affordable, non-judgmental, confidential services for young people