# T3.8.c [Name of organisation]

# Whole-of-System Student Clinical Placement (WoSSP) Procedure

Adapt as needed for your health service policy framework and WoSSP clinical placement approach

**Procedure title: Safety during patient home and service visits**

## Parent policy

Whole-of-system student clinical placements

## Purpose and scope

As part of the WoSSP program students have the opportunity to visit patients in their homes, accompany patients to appointments with other health and welfare providers and undertake service visits. The purpose of this procedure is to:

* promote awareness of potential safety issues for students and patients that could arise during home and community-based health service visits

• identify the potential safety needs of vulnerable parties

* establish the safety protocols to be applied for patient home and service visits
* promote safety and risk assessment capacities as an explicit part of patient engagement and responsible professional practice.

## Preparation for patient home and health service visits

* When preparing for a patient home visit students must comply with the risk assessment protocols and procedures used by staff in the clinical placement/health service setting.
* All patient home visits and health service appointments must be arranged and agreed in advance with the WoSSP clinical educator and relevant health service staff. Preparations must include formal consent from patients and health service providers.
* Students are responsible for ensuring patients are properly briefed about the nature and purpose of home visits and/or appointments, including, for example, patient rights to cancel or withdraw from pre-arranged visits/appointments without notice, complaint processes, safety and so on. Students are also responsible for ensuring patients are given contact details for the WoSSP clinical educator.
* Students must inform the appropriate nurse unit manager or clinical supervisor if they have to leave the clinical environment to participate in a WoSSP patient visit activity.
* When conducting home or service visits student mobile phones must be charged and readily accessible at all times (that is, in the student’s pocket, not in a bag or car). Phones must be on silent or vibrate during visits and only work related or urgent calls should be accepted.

## Student safety procedures for patient home visits

Student safety is the first priority. While we do not anticipate problems during patient home visits, some situations may occur that may make students feel unsafe. Students must exercise caution and be mindful at all times of their own safety and the safety of those they encounter during home visits (for example, children).

* Students will be asked to provide their mobile phone numbers to the WoSSP clinical educator in week one of the WoSSP program.
* When visiting a patient’s home, students must travel in pairs or small teams, or with a qualified health professional.
* On the week/s of the patient home visits, the WoSSP clinical educator will give the [insert OHS contact details as per health service requirements e.g. Hospital Reception] a WoSSP community visit contact form containing student team member names and mobile phone numbers, address of home visit and indication of planned appointment time.
* One nominated student from each WoSSP student team must phone the [insert specific OHS contact information] and state they are arriving at the patient’s home and give the names of student team members in attendance.
* The nominated student from each WoSSP team must phone the [insert specific OHS organisational contact] again when the students have returned home or back to the health service.
* If there has been no contact from students within two hours of the initial call confirming arrival at the patient’s home, the [insert specific OHS organisational area] will try to contact students directly. If they cannot make contact the [OHS contact person] will activate the appropriate OHS procedures to check student safety.

## Professional conduct for patient home and health service visits

* Students must wear their student name badge.
* Appropriate attire and footwear must be worn at all times. To avoid potential choking hazards, ties, scarves, lanyards or other neck apparel must not be worn.
* When visiting a patient at home, respectful, professional behaviour is required. Students are expected to introduce themselves to carers and people they encounter on home or service visits and to explain their role and the purpose of the visit.
* Patient home visits must have a distinct purpose, for example, to take a case history, consider home supports, assist with home assessments, meet carers, undertake a case history, gauge community connections, consider bio-psycho-social impacts, assess how the patient is managing and so on.
* Students must be punctual and attend all home and service visits at the time arranged.
* Unless otherwise arranged, home and service visits should not exceed one hour.

## OH&S, hazards and incidents

* Students must not conduct any clinical work with patients at any time when unsupervised.
* Students must pay particular attention to the layout of any patient’s home they visit, for example, they must know where the front door is located and/or other exits.
* Students are not to park in the home driveway, but on the street or nearby.
* In the event of a medical emergency during a home visit students should call 000, stay with the patient until an ambulance arrives and then report the incident to the WoSSP clinical educator.
* If students feel unsafe for any reason they are to leave the premises immediately, return to [health service] and report their concern to the WoSSP clinical educator. Some situations where a student may not feel safe can include where the patient or people within the home are drug or alcohol affected, or aggressive, or where a patient or other person within the home acts inappropriately.
* If students feel their physical safety is threatened, they must leave the premises immediately and call 000 for police assistance. They must not wait for the police to arrive. Instead, they should return immediately to [health service] and report the incident to the WoSSP clinical educator.

## Safety on high risk bush fire days

* Students are not permitted to visit any patient’s home or health service on days where the fire danger rating is extreme or code red.

## Student travel to patient home visits and health service appointments

* The WoSSP clinical educator will advise students about how to organise travel to home and health service visits.
* Students are not permitted to transport patients at any time.

## Students driving own vehicles

* Students are expected to be familiar with their university’s OH&S guidelines and reporting procedures, particularly regarding student travel and use of private vehicles/motorcycles while on placement.

## Reporting hazards and incidents

* All hazards and incidents must be reported by students, including those that occur on the way to, from or during the clinical placement.
* If the hazard or incident occurs during a visit to a health service agency or patient’s home, students must report the incident immediately to the WoSSP clinical educator and their clinical supervisor and follow the relevant OH&S guidelines and reporting procedures for the health service and their university.
* Where a student is concerned for the safety or wellbeing of vulnerable parties present during a patient home visit or other patient interaction (for example children or people with disabilities) they must report this concern immediately to the WoSSP clinical educator and make a report to the Department of Human Services. Students should refer to the relevant mandated reporting legislation.

## Responsibilities

### WoSSP clinical educator

The WoSSP clinical educator is responsible for:

* coordinating and monitoring patient home visits and/or patient appointments, including liaising with health service staff about any concerns, issues or queries associated with patient visits
* liaising with OH&S staff/program managers in the health service to align WoSSP patient visit protocols and safety procedures with health service staff safety protocols and procedures
* ensuring all students are thoroughly briefed about home visit safety protocols and procedures
* liaising with patients, caregivers and/or families and the patient’s practitioners around any complaints, concerns or queries related to student home visits.

If a safety concern arises, the WoSSP clinical educator must cancel the student-patient arrangement immediately. Information about safety concerns with patients will be stored by the WoSSP clinical educator to ensure students are not matched with the patient in future WoSSP program activities.

If a student is required to make a mandated report about a child or other vulnerable party, this report must be made under the supervision of the WoSSP clinical educator and/or other appropriate parties using the required health service procedures.

### Clinical placement supervisors and course coordinators/clinical placement managers

Clinical placement supervisors and university course coordinators/clinical placement managers are responsible for liaising with the WoSSP clinical educator and other appropriate parties regarding:

* planning, conducting and reviewing WoSSP patient and health service visits
* aligning WoSSP patient-centred curriculum procedures with health education provider and clinical placement provider OH&S policies and procedures
* preparing the WoSSP Student guide
* managing safety concerns, hazards or incidents that may arise as part of patient visit activities in accordance with their respective organisational HR/OHS policies and procedures.

## Related policies and procedures

For example:

* Human resource department procedures
* Occupational health and safety procedures
* Placement allocation and reporting procedures
* Indemnity agreements
* Student placement orientation
* Clinical placement evaluation procedures
* Resolution of complaints and disputes

## WoSSP policies and procedures

* Student code of conduct
* Patient selection policy
* Patient home visits and appointments procedure
* Patient handover procedure

## Review

[Insert name of organiser] will arrange an annual meeting to review this policy and related documents about WoSSP placements. The purpose of the annual review is to:

* review the policy framework including, for example, efficacy of the implementation, use of staff time and resources
* provide a forum to consider issues affecting the success of or barriers to student placements
* consider patient, student and staff feedback
* consider any changes to course requirements.

## Compliance

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| --- | --- |
| Author: | [WoSSP Steering Group] |
| Last review date: |  |
| Policy number: |  |
| Distribution: | [insert staff distribution list] |
| Approved by: | [Manager] |
| Approval date: | [Date] |