



# CHILD PROTECTION IN SCHOOLS, EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

Managed by: Child and Student Wellbeing Unit	Responsible position:	Assistant Director Child and Student Wellbeing Unit	Version: 0.3
Contact person: Gaye Brimacombe	Approved by:	Chief Executive	File number: DECS 05/2011
Contact position: Policy Advisor	Date approved:	16 /12/11	Status: Final
Contact number: 8226 0831	Next review date:	31/12/2012	Security classification: Unclassified

## CONTENTS

1. TITLE.....	3
2. POLICY STATEMENT.....	3
3. PURPOSE .....	3
4. SCOPE .....	4
5. OBJECTIVES .....	4
6. POLICY DETAILS .....	5
7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	7
8. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW .....	9
9. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	9
10. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS.....	10

### REVISION RECORD

Date	Version	Revision description

## **1. TITLE - CHILD PROTECTION – SCHOOLS, EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES**

### **2. STATEMENT**

This policy is based on the following principles.

- 2.1 Protecting the safety of children and young people is a fundamental responsibility that can not be compromised by other considerations.
- 2.2 Children and young people have a right to
  - be treated with respect and to be protected from harm
  - feel and be safe in their interactions with adults and other children and young people
  - understand, as early as possible, what is meant by 'feeling and being safe', and
  - the support of counsellors or designated staff in their education or care setting whose role includes advocacy for their safety and wellbeing.
- 2.3 Children and young people are entitled to the rights outlined in 2.2 irrespective of their special needs, gender, race, sexual orientation or cultural, religious or family circumstances.
- 2.4 Preventing and intervening in the abuse and neglect of children and young people is
  - a moral and legal obligation
  - a contribution to breaking cycles of intergenerational abuse, and
  - a contribution to the safety and wellbeing of everyone participating in DECD sites/services and of the wider community.
- 2.5 Child protection concerns arise within family, community and institutional contexts. The actions and efforts of people from within and outside the education and care setting are needed if interventions on behalf of children and young people are to be successful and sustained.
- 2.6 Maintaining children and young people's attendance at and engagement with education and care environments is a key contributor to their safety and wellbeing.
- 2.7 This policy interconnects with other DECD policies aimed at establishing and maintaining safe and respectful education and care environments.

### **3. PURPOSE**

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy is to describe the broad roles and responsibilities
  - education and care staff and volunteers have towards the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, and
  - education and care leaders have in enabling, supporting and ensuring those responsibilities are met.

#### 4. SCOPE

- 4.1 This policy applies to all employees working in DECD education and care settings and programs.
- 4.2 Parts of this policy apply to volunteers in DECD. Volunteers are enabled and supported to meet relevant requirements in this policy through approved guidelines on the management of volunteers.

#### 5. OBJECTIVES

This policy is designed to ensure that education and care staff and volunteers contribute to children and young people's safety and wellbeing in the following ways

- 5.1 They provide safe, respectful and engaging environments where children and young people observe and are taught positive life skills and values. This helps children and young people to
- develop and expect positive relationships with others
  - be resilient and resourceful in dealing with stress and adversity, and
  - achieve their potential as learners.
- 5.2 They recognise when children and young people's wellbeing or safety is being compromised and they follow up on these concerns. This helps ensure that
- timely and relevant information is gathered and shared with other professionals
  - unsuitable individuals are not retained on education and care sites
  - children, young people and their families are directed to support when they first show signs of needing it, and
  - fewer children and young people are harmed by violence, abuse and neglect occurring within or outside their family environment.
- 5.3 They understand that the needs of children and young people who have been harmed through violence, abuse or neglect may require them to adapt their programs and support accordingly. This means that
- children and young people affected by violence, abuse and neglect are more likely to stay connected to care and education settings and
  - the care and education experience contributes to their recovery and their development of positive coping skills and learning success

## 6. POLICY DETAILS

### Screening

Employees, prescribed volunteers and other persons designated by legislation or DECD policy will be screened for their suitability to work or volunteer with children and young people on DECD sites/services; or to access DECD sites/services for the purposes of training, research or service provision.

- 6.1 DECD screening requirements for employees, prescribed volunteers and other designated persons will meet legislated requirements and national standards.
- 6.2 Employees, prescribed volunteers and other designated persons working at or accessing DECD sites/services will meet DECD screening requirements which include an approved criminal history clearance, updated every three years.

### Training and support

Staff and volunteers will receive training and support which explains their child protection responsibilities and outlines how these responsibilities can be met with sensitivity and purpose. One of these responsibilities is their role as a mandated notifier under Section 11(1) and (2) of the Children's Protection Act 1993.

- 6.3 Staff will undertake approved full day child protection training program as a condition of employment and receive approved three yearly update programs thereafter. This training includes individuals' responsibilities as mandated notifiers.
- 6.4 Volunteers will receive approved child protection induction sessions. This training includes individuals' responsibilities as mandated notifiers.
- 6.5 School counsellors or staff designated to provide advocacy for children and young people's safety and wellbeing will meet relevant DECD job and person specifications and will receive approved induction, ongoing professional development and support.
- 6.6 Staff involved in teaching approved child protection curriculum will receive approved training, ongoing professional development and support.
- 6.7 Staff with responsibilities to investigate serious allegations against employees or volunteers in DECD sites/services will meet DECD job and person specifications, will receive approved induction and will have support and supervision appropriate to the critical nature of their work.

## Conduct

Staff and volunteers are expected to relate respectfully with all members of the education or care community. Staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report and intervene against behaviours that compromise the safety or wellbeing of children and young people.

- 6.8 All staff and volunteers will follow approved protective practice guidelines in their physical and social interactions with children and young people.
- 6.9 All staff will follow approved child or student attendance and behaviour management policies and incident response guidelines.
- 6.10 All staff will meet adult conduct requirements outlined in legislation, state Government codes, cabinet directives and licensing, approving or regulating processes.
- 6.11 Serious allegations against staff or volunteers will be referred for investigation by the appropriate authority and decisions about the placement of the individual facing an allegation will be made with the best interests of children as the guiding consideration.

## Curriculum

Children and young people will engage with curriculum which explicitly teaches them about the nature of personal safety and wellbeing, their rights to personal safety and wellbeing, help-seeking and self-protecting behaviours and their responsibilities to the safety and wellbeing of others.

- 6.12 All children and young people in DECD preschools and schools will access approved child protection curriculum.
- 6.13 The approved child protection curriculum will be taught by staff who have received training in its use.
- 6.14 The approved child protection curriculum will be reviewed in response to emerging evidence about child abuse and violence prevention programs.

## Communication and collaboration

Issues affecting children and young people's safety and wellbeing are often complex. Successful interventions require carefully coordinated and communicated actions.

- 6.15 Sites/services will communicate to all members of their communities the limits of confidentiality, the unqualified commitment to children's safety and the adherence to state information sharing guidelines.

- 6.16 Sites/services will consider all available sources of support from within DECD and from other agencies and organisations when the needs of vulnerable children and young people are first identified.
- 6.17 Sites/services will raise concerns through regional personnel when they believe collaborations and/or available services are inadequate to protecting children’s safety and wellbeing.
- 6.18 Sites/services will support and contribute to interagency efforts to improve family and community safety and wellbeing.
- 6.19 Sites/services will follow DECD, state and national requirements for documentation and record keeping.

## 7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Parties	Responsibilities
7.1 Site/service leaders	<p>ensure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>volunteers and non teaching staff are screened prior to commencing at the site and have an approved current criminal history clearance</li> <li>volunteers receive approved child protection induction recorded at the site/service</li> <li>3 yearly approved staff child protection training is facilitated and recorded</li> <li>concerns raised about staff or volunteer conduct are responded to in accordance with approved protective practice guidelines</li> <li>children and young people in preschools and schools access the approved child protection curriculum</li> </ul> <p>monitor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>practice and conduct at the site to ensure it is in accordance with the requirements outlined in this policy and proactively intervene with emerging performance problems</li> </ul> <p>enable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>counsellors and staff in designated advocacy positions to fulfil their roles, to access required training and development and to contribute to regional counselling/advocacy networks</li> </ul>
7.2 Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>act in accordance with the requirements outlined in this policy</li> <li>raise concerns when impediments to the protection of children and young people’s safety and wellbeing are identified</li> <li>ensure they have an approved current criminal history clearance</li> </ul>
7.3 Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Act in accordance with the instruction and advice of the approved child protection induction for volunteers</li> </ul>

Parties	Responsibilities
7.4 Regional leaders	<p>ensure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• three yearly approved staff child protection update training is facilitated and recorded for regional personnel</li> <li>• regional personnel have current approved criminal history clearances</li> <li>• regional emergency response plans enable regional personnel to support sites in managing serious critical incidents</li> </ul> <p>enable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regional personnel to fulfil their roles in providing services to children and young people identified by sites/services as needing additional support</li> <li>• regional personnel to support and contribute to interagency efforts to improve family and community safety and wellbeing</li> </ul> <p>provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support to site/service leaders experiencing difficulties in maintaining safe and respectful environments</li> </ul> <p>address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• performance issues - as they relate to meeting the requirements of this policy - with site/service leaders and regional personnel</li> </ul> <p>raise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• concerns through corporate DECD leaders when impediments to protecting children's safety and wellbeing are identified</li> </ul>
7.5 Corporate Leaders	<p>ensure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• designated positions are maintained within corporate DECD to oversee the implementation of this policy's requirements and to monitor and manage all associated risks</li> <li>• approved staff child protection training programs are updated on a three yearly basis and provided across the workforce within a 12 month period</li> <li>• DECD investigative responses to serious allegations against staff or volunteers are timely, procedurally fair, are managed by appropriately trained and supported personnel and are conducted with the interests of children as the paramount consideration</li> <li>• Criminal history screening processes are maintained to meet policy or legislated requirements</li> <li>• risks to DECD regarding its compliance with this policy are identified and addressed</li> <li>• issues identified as impediments to the protection of children's safety and wellbeing are responded to and raised at Chief Executive or Ministerial forums as appropriate</li> </ul> <p>monitor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the management and movement of staff whose conduct has compromised children or young people's wellbeing or the reputation of teaching or children's services professions</li> </ul>

Parties	Responsibilities
7.5 Corporate Leaders (cont.)	<p>support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>child protection collaboration with the non government school sectors, the Teacher's Registration Board, relevant regulating bodies and other government agencies and organisations</li> </ul> <p>manage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>whole of system reviews of serious critical incidents and actioning of subsequent recommendations</li> </ul>

## 8. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

- 8.1 Site/service leaders will provide ongoing monitoring of their site's/service's compliance with this policy and may be required to provide reports on elements of that compliance as part of their 3 yearly child protection update training program.
- 8.2 Regional leaders will monitor the reports provided by site leaders as outlined in 8.1, support sites to address gaps in compliance and advise corporate leaders as required.
- 8.3 Corporate leaders will ensure the designated positions outlined in 7.5 maintain oversight of the policy's relevance, its alignment with legislation and national standards and will amend the policy as appropriate.

## 9. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Meaning
Approved	Refers to the current version of a DECD training program, curriculum, policy or set of guidelines. See section 10 Associated Documents - DECD policies/programs/guidelines.
Children and young people	Refers to children from birth to 18 but includes young adults over the age of 18 with developmental disabilities enrolled at a DECD site/service.
Prescribed volunteers	Volunteers for whom a criminal history check is a condition of their volunteer role either legislated or by DECD policy.

---

Site/Service Leader	Refers to the individual who has ultimate responsibility for children/young people's welfare in that site/service; for example, the principal, the director, a manager or approved Family Day Care Educator supported by his/her coordinator
Site/Service	Refers to preschools and schools and all locations where DECD services and programs operate. It encompasses centre based child care facilities, Out of Schools Hours Care facilities and the homes of approved Family Day Care Educators.
Staff	Refers to employees, professional service providers, other paid education and care participants, tertiary students and volunteers working in Sites/Services as defined in this policy.
Volunteers	Refers to all adults providing a volunteer service in DECD sites/services. This includes volunteers who may receive remuneration for their service from other organisations such as Christian Pastoral Support Workers, mentors or coaches.

---

## 10 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

### International Conventions

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

### National policies

National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children

Education and Care Services National Law (2010) and Regulations (2011), and associated National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care

National Safe Schools Framework

---

Name of document

Page 10 - 11

Time and Date

**State legislation**

Children's Protection Act 1993

Equal Opportunity Act 1984

**State policies**

Keeping Them Safe SA Government's Child Protection Reform Program

Information Sharing: Guidelines for Promoting the Safety and Wellbeing of Children, Young People and their Families

Interagency Code of Practice - Investigation of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

**DECD policies/programs/guidelines**

Protective Practices for Staff in their Interactions with Children and Young People

Keeping Safe Child Protection Curriculum

Framework for the Management of Volunteers in DECD sites

Responding to Abuse and Neglect - Education and Care Training (Staff)

Responding to Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care Information Session (Volunteers)

Responding to Problem Sexual Behaviour in Children and Young People – Guidelines for Staff in Education and Care settings

Supporting and Managing Children's Behaviour

Criminal History Screening Policy

---