

# Child Protection Policy

## Policy Statement

At SU QLD we firmly believe that every child and young person matters deeply to God and deserves a safe and meaningful life. This is why we are committed to safeguarding the social, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing of all children, young people, and families in our care.

This Child Protection Policy (this Policy) demonstrates our commitment to proactively nurture a child safe culture and working environment.

All our staff and volunteers understand the role they share in upholding this commitment, and everyone is empowered and equipped to champion a child safe culture in bringing hope to a young generation.

## Scope

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from harm and abuse. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse advises that a child safe organisation has competent and committed leadership and governance which develops and maintains a child safe culture ([Interim Report 2014, Volume 1, p 141](#)). Therefore; for the Child Protection Policy (this Policy) to be effective it must require awareness at all levels of the organisation.

This Policy applies to all SU QLD employees, volunteers, contractors, interns, consultants and training students (SU QLD associated person/s). It requires a commitment to shared personal responsibility to ensure children are protected from all forms of harm and abuse, and an undertaking to consider the opinions of young people, children and parents, and use their opinions to enhance our child protection practices and procedures.

All SU QLD associated persons are also expected to abide by the SU QLD [Code of Conduct](#) and relevant SU QLD Policies and Procedures as they relate to the professional standards and conduct expected from everyone who comes in the scope of this Policy.

## Commitment

We will:

1. Take preventative action by having a regularly reviewed Child Protection Policy in place, supported by a communications strategy to communicate changes;
2. Work proactively to raise child safety awareness in the areas we operate and implement/enhance policies and procedures to mitigate risk;
3. Respond immediately and appropriately where child safety concerns arise;
4. Empower everyone including children and parents, to have a say in our efforts to enhance child safe practices and procedures;
5. Foster a culture of transparency that supports all persons to safely disclose harm, or risks of harm;

6. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing principles while keeping child safety as the overriding consideration;
7. Question, and continuously improve, our recruitment screening practices to safeguard selection of only the most suitable people to work with children;
8. Report suspected harm, abuse, neglect or mistreatment without delay to the appropriate authorities;
9. Comply with relevant legislation;
10. Adhere to the Standards and applicable recommendations as detailed in the [Final Report – Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse](#).

*Summary of the 10 Royal Commission Child Safe Standards*

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| <i>Standard 1.</i>  | <i>Child Safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance, and culture</i>   |
| <i>Standard 2.</i>  | <i>Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously</i>  |
| <i>Standard 3.</i>  | <i>Families and communities are informed and involved</i>  |
| <i>Standard 4.</i>  | <i>Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account</i>   |
| <i>Standard 5.</i>  | <i>People working with children are suitable and supported</i>   |
| <i>Standard 6.</i>  | <i>Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child-focused</i>  |
| <i>Standard 7.</i>  | <i>Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training</i> |
| <i>Standard 8.</i>  | <i>Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur</i>  |
| <i>Standard 9.</i>  | <i>Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved</i>  |
| <i>Standard 10.</i> | <i>Policies and procedures document how the institution is child safe.</i>   |

## Responsibilities

### **The SU QLD Board of Directors** (Responding to Standards 1; 7; 9; 10)

- Ultimately accountable for the detection and prevention of child abuse;
- Responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal Child Protection control systems are in place; and
- Responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures are in place and that the SU QLD Code of Conduct appropriately addresses Child Protection issues.

### **The SU QLD Chief Executive Officer** (Responding to Standards 1; 5; 6; 7; 9; 10)

- Directs and coordinates investigations into allegations of child abuse;
- Ensures that SU QLD associated person/s are aware of the relevant Child Protection policies and procedures;
- Ensures that SU QLD associated person/s are aware of their obligations to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety); and
- Ensures that SU QLD associated person/s are aware of their obligations to report a suspected abuse of a child or young person in accordance with approved processes.

### **SU QLD Managers** (Responding to Standards 2 - 10)

- Promote child safety as a critical priority for SU QLD;
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and mitigate any risk;
- Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse;
- Provide support for SU QLD associated person/s in undertaking their child protection responsibilities; and
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected child abuse.

## **SU QLD associated person/s (Responding to Standards 2 - 8)**

- Share responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse;
- Must familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and SU QLD's policy and procedures in relation to Child Protection, and comply with all requirements;
- While working or volunteering in a school must immediately give a written report to the principal or principal's supervisor when they become aware or reasonably suspect the sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse of a student under 18 years. Where the SU associated person is not working or volunteering in a school they must report any reasonable belief to the relevant authorities (such as the police and/or the state-based child protection services) that a child or young person's safety is at risk and fulfill their legal obligations as mandatory reporters;
- Must report any suspicion that a child or young person's safety may be at risk to their supervisor (or if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person in the organisation); and
- Must provide an environment that is supportive of all children and young people's emotional and physical safety.

## **Recruitment and Selection**

SU QLD undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all employees, volunteers, contractors, and interns. Our recruitment and screening processes aim to:

- Promote and protect the safety of all children and young people under the care of SU QLD;
- Identify the safest and most suitable people who share SU QLD's values and commitment to protecting children and young people; and
- Prevent a person from associating with SU QLD if they pose a risk to children or young people.

## **Risk Management**

SU QLD will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach. Risk oversight, compliance, and controls, are stipulated in the [Risk and Compliance Policy](#). Members of Risk Management committees will receive training in relation to child safety.

## **Reporting**

We always act in the best interests of children and young people. If we become aware of a situation where actual or potential harm to a child or young person exists, we are required to immediately report this situation as per the required process (to be added). We will also perform an initial risk assessment (and subsequent regular risk assessments) to identify and minimize any risks to a child or young person and take preventative and/or remedial action as necessary and without undue delay.

In such instances, if a child or young person has disclosed or appears intent to disclose this information to us we should inform the child or young person about the limits of confidentiality, the purposes for which the information is obtained, and how it may be used. Wherever practicable it is preferable for this to be done prior to the child or young person's disclosure. SU QLD however acknowledges that this may not always be possible.

# References

- [Australian Human Rights Commission - National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)
- [HSCP Safety Management System](#)
- [OFM Recruitment Process swim lanes](#)
- [Chaplaincy Recruitment Process](#)
- [Recruitment Process Map – Chaplains](#)
- [Volunteers: Camp Director Handbook – Managing a Team](#)
- [Complaints & Concerns Standard](#) Children & Young People
- SU QLD [Code of Conduct](#) (incl. Child Safety Code of Conduct)

# Definitions

**Child and young person:** Refers to anyone under the age of 18

**Empowered and equipped:** Having the knowledge, confidence, means, and ability to do the right thing or make the right decisions in the context of this policy.

**Harm:** Harm to a child or young person includes any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child or young person’s physical, psychological or emotional well-being by any cause, other than confirmed accidental harm not involving negligence or misconduct. Harm to a child or young person includes minor harm that is cumulative in nature that would result in a detrimental effect of a significant nature to the child or young person if allowed to continue. Harm can be caused by, amongst other things: physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; sexual abuse or exploitation; domestic or family violence; bullying; or self-harm.

**Mandatory Reporter:** In the context of this policy a mandated reporter is any SU QLD associated person/s who is engaged in child-related services or activities.

**SU QLD:** For the purposes of this document, SU QLD includes the states/territories of QLD & ACT.

**SU QLD Associated Persons:** All SU QLD employees, volunteers, contractors, interns, consultants, and training students associated with SU QLD and who engage in child and young person-related services or activities.

**SU QLD Managers:** Any SU QLD employee who is appointed in a leadership capacity with the responsibility to manage or oversee the activities of SU QLD associated persons. This includes any managerial role in the SU QLD structure (whether leading a team or specialist function), and Camp/Event Directors.

DOCUMENT CONTROL SUMMARY	
EFFECTIVE DATE	17 Sept 2020
REVISION DATE	17 Sept 2021
AUTHOR	Risk & Compliance Manager
APPROVED BY	Chief Executive Officer