

DARA SCHOOL

1

CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS POLICY

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CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS POLICY 1

1. PURPOSE

Dara School is committed to the well-being of all children attending the school and to the provision of a healthy environment in which children and young people have a right to be safe and protected at all times and feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential.

2. COMMITMENT TO THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Dara School is committed to the care, safety and protection of all children and young people attending the school. We support the rights and wellbeing of our students, staff, volunteers, parents and caregivers, and wider community, and encourage their active participation in building and maintaining a secure, positive and respectful environment for all.

This policy supports this commitment and demonstrates Dara School's compliance with the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA) (CYPS Act); the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 (SA) (CSPP Act); the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Regulations 2019 (SA) (CSPP Regulations) and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

We are committed to diversity. We believe all people should be respected and treated equitably regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, or religious beliefs (National Principle 4).

Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated.

Dara School will ensure that it displays information about services that can assist children and young people (such as Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800 and Youth Helpline on 1300 13 17 19) in areas accessed by them.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1 This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, board members, parents and caregivers, students, children, young people, families, contractors, and other individuals involved with the school in physical and online environments.
- 3.2 All staff, volunteers and Board members will be required to sign in writing to accept and act in accordance with this policy.
- 3.3 All contractors will be required to accept and act on this policy as a condition of their contracts or arrangements if they are in contact with children.

4. COMMUNICATION

Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing (National Principle 3).

At enrolment, parents or carers will be given a copy of this policy and procedures which outlines the requirements to report some matters irrespective of parents' wishes, in preventing harm to children and young people.

A copy of the policy is made available to the community via our school portal and communication App. All staff volunteers and Board members are given a copy at induction and are required to sign a written statement indicating they have read and will accept and act on the policy.

Any person requiring a hard copy of the Child Safe Environments policy will be provided with a copy under Chapter 8 (Section 114(5)) of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017.

5. PARTICIPATION OF FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously (National Principle 2).

At Dara School our philosophy is from a student-centered approach to learning, providing students with a voice about their learning, which also encourages students to provide feedback on matters that are of importance to them. We teach children and young people what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children or their parents/ carers raise with us.

Building strong and positive relationships between teachers and students, teachers and parents/ carers and between members of staff is foundational to our work at Dara school. The student's mentors spend a number of years with students and our students generally feel very comfortable sharing any concerns with their class teacher or mentors. Apart from individual conversations, developmentally appropriate opportunities for groups and whole classes are provided, to encourage and enable the sharing of perceptions and concerns arising from school experiences.

- a) Formal student input is sought on a regular basis, using an online questionnaire and inviting formal or informal feedback from children and young people about their experiences.
- b) Students and parents/ carers are regularly made aware of the relevant formal Grievance Procedures.
- c) Working in mixed ability groups, students appreciate everyone's unique contribution, students develop a capacity for teamwork, an ability to respect others' opinions and to clearly communicate their own voice.

6. CODE OF CONDUCT

To ensure equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected (National Principle 4) and there are processes in place to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused (National Principle 6). A code of conduct for working with child must be abided by.

The Code of Conduct for working with children and young people applies to all staff, volunteers and governing Board members.

A copy of the Child Safe Environments policy and Code of Conduct for working with children and young people is available on the Dara School website and is provided as part of the induction of staff members, volunteers, Board members and contractors.

All staff, volunteers, and governing Board members will read, sign and follow the Code of Conduct.

If any person, including children and young persons, suspects the Code of Conduct has been breached, they can report the breach by informing the child protection officer or principal.

Dara School enforces this Child Safe Environments policy and our Code of Conduct (Appendix 1.2). In the event of any breach or suspected breach, the principal will instigate a review that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach):

- Remedial education,
- Counselling,
- Increased supervision,
- The restriction of duties,
- Suspension, or,
- In the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract, or engagement.

A failure by a mandated notifier to report a suspicion formed on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is, or may be, at risk, may result in a person being prosecuted and a court imposing a fine. See section 31(1) of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017.

We will:

- Ensure all staff are trained in identifying and reporting on children at risk of harm, including providing clear procedures, providing step by step guidance on actions to be taken when there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare and on responding to suspected harm or risk of harm.
- Conduct appropriate background checks prior to employing staff and engaging others who may have contact with students – e.g., all volunteers including drivers, parents attending camps, music tutors, etc.

7. RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

Dara School takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice (National Principle 5).

During the recruitment of people, Dara School strives to only engage the most suitable people to work within our environment by:

- Providing clear position descriptions with a clear commitment to child safety and wellbeing,
- Conducting face-to-face interviews that include behavioural questions concerning child safeguarding,
- Requesting applicants provide at least two referees, who are contacted
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers have a valid, 'not prohibited' Working with Children Check' prior to commencement at Dara School, as required by the [Child Safety \(Prohibited Persons\) Regulations 2019](#),
- Independently verifying applicant's qualifications, by generating certificate of interrogation and adding to our WWC register
- reviewing register for upcoming renewal dates regularly
- Utilising on-the-job observation and probationary periods.

8. SUPERVISION, TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

At Dara School people working with children and young people must be suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice (National Principle 5). The staff and volunteers are provided with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through our ongoing education and training (National Principle 7).

8.1 SUPERVISION

All staff have regular sessions that include a focus on child safety and wellbeing.

All staff engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done by monitoring and regular performance reviews.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our school policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

8.2 SUPPORT

Staff and volunteers will receive an induction prior to commencing at Dara School that explains their child protection responsibilities.

All staff have regular performance reviews.

Staff are made aware of the Child Protection Officer, who has an educative role within the organisation.

8.3 TRAINING

Child protection training will outline the roles and responsibilities of a mandated notifier. School staff, counsellors, or staff designated to provide advocacy and wellbeing will meet job and person specifications and will receive ongoing professional development. This includes the following:

- all staff and volunteers must read and understand the Mandatory Notification Information Booklet
- Volunteers, staff, and governing council members are to access plink to complete 'Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse, and Neglect - Education and Care (RRHAN-EC)'
- require all staff and volunteers to view the resources Keeping our kids safe at SNAICC
- professional development opportunities are made available to all staff to build knowledge and skills regarding the wellbeing and development of children and young people.
- child safety is a standing item on meeting agendas

The school will complete yearly audit of employees and volunteers to ensure everyone has the most recent training available on Responding to Risk of Harm, Abuse and Neglect every 3 years.

9. REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO HARM AND RISKS OF HARM

All staff members, including teachers, educational support officers and volunteers, are mandated notifiers within Dara School. And have a legal obligation to report harm or risk of harm as soon as possible if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child is, or maybe at risk of harm. Non- Mandated notifiers are encouraged to make voluntary reports and can speak with any mandated notifier on the process of how to complete reports, however the individual who identifies the harm or risk of harm is the one who must make the report. It must not be reported internally or passed to another staff member who then determines whether it's a reportable matter. Reasonable grounds to form a suspicion that a child or young person may be at risk may include:

- a) when a child or young person tells you they are at risk or have been harmed
- b) when your own observations of a particular child or young person's behaviour and/or injuries lead you to suspect they are at risk, or harm is occurring
- c) when a child or young person tells you that they know of someone who is at risk or has been harmed (they may possibly be referring to themselves)
- d) when you hear about risk or harm to a child or young person from someone who is in a position to provide reliable information, perhaps a relative or friend,

neighbour or sibling of the child or young person.

See Procedures for Managing Disclosures and Suspicions of Harm Appendix 1.1

If you are unsure if an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion gives rise to a concern about harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, you must always err on the side of caution and report to CARL.

9.1 IMMEDIATE ACTION

If a school staff member or volunteer witnesses an incident of child harm, or reasonably believes, suspects or receives a disclosure or allegation that a child has been, or is at risk of being harmed, they must:

- If a child is at immediate risk of harm, separate alleged victims and others involved, administer first aid (appropriate to their level of training) and call 000 for urgent medical or police assistance where required to respond to immediate health or safety concerns.
- Report to Child Abuse Report Line (CARL)/SA Police immediately.
- Once you have notified CARL/SA Police, please notify the Principal using the Mandatory Notification Record 1.3 at your earliest convenience.

9.2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

All reports regarding the reasonable belief that a child or young person is, or may be, at risk of harm are to be made to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78 or if at immediate risk, report to South Australia Police (SAPOL) on 000. In cases involving Aboriginal children and young people, support is provided by Yaitya Tirramangkotti – an Aboriginal team, via the CARL number.

It is the responsibility of the individual who identifies the harm or risk of harm to make the report to CARL/SAPOL. They should not rely on another staff member to make the decision about making the report.

- The reporting person and Dara School will be guided by the relevant authority (Department for Child Protection/SA Police) about how to proceed after a notification.

9.3 SUPPORTING THOSE INVOLVED IN THE NOTIFICATION

Dara School prioritises the ongoing safety and support to all children and young people involved in a mandatory notification, as well as supporting staff, volunteers, other students and families as required. Dara School will do this by ensuring:

- conversations are confidential in nature and only involve those necessary to the narrative.
- those involved in the process of a notification have access to support, guidance and counselling throughout the process

- conversations, requests and procedures are followed through and followed up and documented
- no information regarding a report shall be shared or provided with any entity unless at the direction of the relevant authority (Department for Child Protection or SA Police).
- reports are to be taken seriously in their nature and actioned appropriately within the scope of any one person's role.
- Counselling and guidance can also be provided by the following services:
 - Kids HelpLine 1800 55 1800
 - Parents Helpline 1300 364 100
 - Lifeline 13 11 14

9.4 ONGOING PROTECTION AND SUPPORT

The principal must ensure appropriate steps are taken by the school to protect the child and other children from any continued risk of harm. These steps must be taken in consultation with the relevant external agency or Department for Child Protection, SAPOL or CARL. Ongoing protection will also include further reports to authorities if new information comes to light or further incidents occur.

Appropriate, culturally sensitive, and ongoing support must be offered and provided to all affected students. Ongoing support will be based on any available advice from the Department for Child Protection, parents and carers, health practitioners and other authorities (such as AISSA) and may include referral to wellbeing professionals, development of a safety plan, student support meetings with their mentor and for student incidents.

If a school staff member or volunteer is involved in an incident of harming a child, or reasonably suspected of harm or an allegation of harm has been made by a child, parent or staff member, the person will be removed from any role that has contact from children and young people until authorities have concluded their investigation.

9.5 CONTACTING PARENTS OR CARERS

The principal must ensure parents and carers are notified unless advised otherwise by CARL or Police, or there are other safety and wellbeing concerns in relation to informing parents/carers.

Principals may contact the AISSA for advice on notifying parents and carers, and where relevant, the wider school community.

9.6 DOCUMENTATION

The principal will ensure that:

- All documentation will remain strictly confidential.
- Staff members should make a record of what they have heard, observed, and done and should sign and date their notes whilst using the following principles of good record keeping:
 - a) Be factual and record only what is relevant.
 - b) Identify the people whose actions or views you have recorded.
 - c) Objective observations

All notes and other records relating to the incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion, including the schools immediate and ongoing actions, are stored securely in a locked office filing cabinet.

10. REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO GENERAL COMPLAINTS OR FEEDBACK

Dara School promotes and values feedback and works to manage grievances to improve performance, systems and service delivery. There are processes in place to ensure all grievances and complaints are addressed, investigated fairly and documented in a timely manner. The principles of natural justice and procedural fairness will be applied when managing grievances. The processes in place to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused (National Principle 6).

Grievance Policy and Procedures are provided to all new families in the Parent Handbook. Staff, students and parents are provided with regular reminders of these procedures via class meetings, staff meetings and the school communication app.

Students are encouraged to communicate with their family and teacher when concerns arise. In most cases, issues can be easily resolved by discussing the issue with a parent or caregiver, mentor teacher or class teacher. However, from time to time, a student may find that a concern has not been resolved. In these instances, students are encouraged to seek the support of a parent or caregiver or teacher resolve a complaint.

Complaints can be made in a variety of ways:

- Verbally, either in person or by phone,
- In writing, via email or letter,
- When a complaint has been received, the school will:
 - Listen to the complaint/feedback and make a record of it,
 - Advise the time expected for an outcome,
 - Respond to the complainant with an outcome,
 - Clearly document and securely store decisions and actions taken in response to complaints and feedback,

- Make sure that procedural fairness is followed at all times,
- Staff will take student's complaints seriously and attend to them as a matter of priority while maintaining confidentiality,
- Where teachers are unable to take appropriate action regarding a student's complaint, they will inform the principal.
- Grievances relating to staff, staff conduct, or aspects of the service or program are to be directed to the principal,
- Children may have a family member or other representative to assist them to raise their concerns,
- Children are encouraged to give feedback and make suggestions through conversations with staff and evaluation forms.

11. RISK MANAGEMENT

At Dara School, the physical and online environment promotes safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed (National Principle 8).

To maintain a safe environment for children and young people, Dara school has a Risk management plan. The plan is reviewed, and strategies implemented to minimise and manage those risks. (See Appendix 1.4)

12. DEFINITIONS

List any abbreviations, acronyms specific terms used in the body of the document and their meaning.

Child or Young Person	Persons under 18 years of age.
Code of Conduct	The Dara School Code of Conduct for working with children and young People, available on the Dara School website.
Complainant	Person who makes a complaint.
Harm	Section 17 of the Safety Act defines 'harm' to mean physical or psychological harm (whether caused by an act or omission), including harm caused by sexual, physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect.
National Police Check	A summary of an individual's offender history in Australia and a record of their criminal history relating to convictions, finding of guilt or pending court proceedings. They are available from

South Australia Police (SAPOL) or organisations accredited by the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission.

It is an organisational decision whether a National Police Certificate (NPC) is required for workers or volunteers, however the organisation can no longer use the NPC to assess whether a person is suitable to work or volunteer with children in South Australia – this must be determined by a current, not prohibited Working with Children Check.

Working with Children Check People working or volunteering with children in South Australia must, by law, have a current, not prohibited Working with Children Check. A Working with Children Check is an assessment of whether a person poses an unacceptable risk to children. As part of the process, the Screening Unit will look at criminal history, child protection information and other information. A valid Working with Children Check is issued by the Screening Unit of the Department of Human Services which meets the requirements of the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016.

13. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Social Media Policy 17

Privacy and Confidentiality Policy 23

Grievance Policies and Procedures 4

Protective Practices for Staff

Camps and Excursions Policy 8

Against Bullying, Discrimination, Harassment and Violence Policy 3

Human Resource Policy 26

14. RELATIONSHIP TO REGULATIONS

This policy supports criterion 3.1 of the Standards for Registration and Review of Registration of Schools in South Australia

Criterion 3.1

The school complies with Commonwealth and South Australian laws and policies that apply to the safety, health and welfare of its students and any relevant child protection laws and policies for employment of all staff and management of contractors, volunteers and visitors.

As well as the procedures set down under the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017, Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

15. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) – 131 478 accessed 26 May 2022

www.reportchildabuse.families.sa.gov.au

Department for Education accessed 26 May 2022 Department for Education plink - Dashboard page WHS act

Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 accessed 26 May 2022 [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017 | South Australian Legislation](#)

Creating Child Safe Environments, accessed 26 May 2022 at DHS - Child safe environments

DfE Responding to Abuse and Neglect, accessed 26 May 2022 at Responding to Abuse and Neglect Training

| Educators SA (educators-sa.sa.edu.au)

DfE Policy: Child Protection in Schools, Early Childhood Education and Care Services at <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/doc/child-protection-schools-early-childhood-education-and-care-policy>

Cyber Bullying accessed 26 May 2022 [Cyberbullying | eSafety Commissioner](#)

Keeping Them Safe: A shared approach to child wellbeing accessed on 12 March 2022 at <https://theirtuturesmatter.nsw.gov.au/about-us/other-reforms/keep-them-safe>

Protective Practices for Staff in Their Interactions with Students (2019) DfE accessed 26 May 2022 at <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/doc/protective-practices-staff-their-interactions-children-and-young-people>

[National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)

[Commonwealth Child Safe Framework](#)

[Privacy Act 1988](#)

Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people guidelines for staff working or volunteering, access 23 September 2022



[protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people.pdf](#)

16. FORMS/GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES RELATED TO THIS POLICY

- 1.1 Procedures for Managing Disclosures and Suspicions of Harm
- 1.2 Code of conduct for working with children and young people
- 1.3 Mandatory notification record
- 1.4 Risk Management Plan

17. POLCY REVIEW

Dara School leadership and governance will review and improve this policy and procedures at least once in every 5-year period as required by section 114(1) of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 217 and National Principle 9.

- There may be instances when the policy will need to be reviewed and amended, such as when:
- New or added risks are identified for children or young people, which may require a change in the policy or procedures,
- A critical incident where a child or young person has experienced harm through involvement at Dara School,
- Concerns are raised by anyone involved in your organisation about child safety or welfare in the organisation, or
- Awareness or compliance to the policy and/or procedures is low.
- When the Safe Environment for Children policy is reviewed or updated, the Principal will lodge a new child safe environments compliance statement with the [Department of Human Services](#).

Title	Child Protection Policy
Policy Reference Number	1
Responsible for review	School Leadership and School Governing Council
Policy approved on	01 January 2017
Policy reviewed and approved on	22 June 2020
Policy reviewed	October 2022
Replaced with	Child Safe Environment Policy
Adopted and Implemented	October 2022
Policy due for Review	November 2027