



THE HUTCHINS SCHOOL

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

Relevant legislation	Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023 (Tas) Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997 (Tas) Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (Cth) National Principles for Child Safe Organisations 2019 Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 (Tas)
Commencement date	25 November 2015
Last review date	01 November 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to affirm The Hutchins School's strong commitment to the safety of children and young people in all of its programs and services. As part of that commitment, this policy is reviewed, approved and endorsed by the School Board.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff - whether paid employees or volunteers - engaged with the School.

3. Objectives

The primary objective of this policy is to provide information about the various mechanisms that are designed to support and uphold the School's commitment to safeguarding children and young people.

Created by: Policy and Compliance Manager	Document version: 3.0
Online location: https://myhutchinstasedu.sharepoint.com/sites/PolicyCompliance	Next review date: 01 November 2027
Printed copies are uncontrolled. For the latest version please refer to SharePoint Online.	CRICOS 00478F Page 1 of 2

4. Definitions

Bullying	<p>Bullying is an inappropriate use of power by one or more people over another less powerful person or group and is generally an act that is repeated over time. Bullying takes many forms which are often interrelated and may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Verbal</i> (name calling, put downs, threats); • <i>Physical</i> (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting); • <i>Social</i> (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating); and/or • <i>Psychological</i> (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions).
Child or young person	A person under the age of eighteen years.
'Direct role'	A 'direct role' is one that has contact with children and young people that is not incidental, but normally part of providing a service, program or activity for children and young people.
Emotional or psychological abuse	Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a child does not receive the love, affection or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. Such abuse may involve repeated rejection or threats to a child. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule and rejection or continual coldness are all examples of emotional abuse. These behaviors may result in significant damage to the child's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.
Family violence	Family violence occurs when children are forced to live with violence between adults in their home. It is harmful to children. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of family in a child or young person's life. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.
Grooming	Grooming is where an adult builds a relationship with a child with a view to abusing them at some stage. There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of children. For some perpetrators, there may be a lengthy period of time before the abuse begins. The child may be given special attention and what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a child in and abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom children but abuse them without forming a relationship at all. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities, or in internet chatrooms, in social media or by other technological channels.
Harm	Harm is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; • sexual abuse or exploitation; • a single act, omission or circumstance; and/or • a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.
Neglect	<p>Neglect is the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide the child with the basic necessities of life. Such neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water, medical attention or supervision to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed. Categories of neglect include physical neglect, medical neglect, abandonment or desertion, emotional neglect and educational neglect. The issue of neglect must be considered within the context of resources reasonably available.</p>
Physical abuse	<p>Physical abuse occurs when a person subjects a child to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a child. Physically abusive behavior includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, excessive and physically harmful over training, and kicking. It also includes giving children harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poison. Certain types of punishment can also be considered physical abuse if they place a child at risk of being hurt.</p>
Reportable Conduct*	<p>For the purposes of this policy, reportable conduct is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a relevant offence committed against, with or in the presence of a child, whether or not criminal proceedings in relation to the offence have been commenced or concluded; or sexual misconduct that does not form part of a sexual offence, against, with or in the presence of a child; or physical violence against a child; or grooming of a child; or conduct that causes, or is likely to cause, significant emotional or psychological harm to a child; or significant neglect of a child, <p>regardless of whether or not the alleged conduct occurred within the course of a worker's duties at the School.</p> <p>Further information on reportable conduct may be found at the website for the Office of the Independent Regulator, and in the School's Reportable Conduct Policy.</p> <p>* These definitions are derived from the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act, with minor modifications made for textual clarity and context.</p>
Sexual abuse	<p>Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or a person of authority (e.g. older) involves a child in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their power, authority or position over the child or young person for their own benefit. It can include making sexual</p>

	comments to a child, engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching a child's genitals or breasts, oral sex or intercourse with a child. Encouraging a child to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos is also sexual abuse. Engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet is also considered sexual abuse.
Sexual exploitation	Sexual exploitation occurs when children are forced into sexual activities that are then recorded in some way and/or used to produce pornography. Such pornography can be in the form of actual photos or videos or published on the internet. Exploitation can also involve children who are forced into prostitution.
Staff	For the purpose of this policy, 'staff' refers to all people engaged with the School, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity. This includes volunteers and contractors.

5. Policy statement

The School takes seriously its responsibility to deliver a learning environment that is caring, nurturing and safe, promoting equity and respecting diversity by:

- stating its commitment through the [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy](#);
- actively anticipating children's diverse circumstances;
- responding effectively to children and young people with additional vulnerabilities;
- giving all children access to information, support and complaints processes;
- fulfilling the intent of the [Universal Principle](#) for cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children through voice, treaty and truth-telling, as envisioned in our [Reconciliation Action Plan](#); and
- paying particular attention to the needs of, and support structures for:
 - those with a disability;
 - children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
 - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Intersex (LGBTI) children; and
 - children and young people who are unable to live at home.

It is the responsibility of everyone at the School to:

- maintain a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and neglect;
- support the right of children and young people to feel safe and be safe when participating in the School's activities;
- protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation (including from the School's staff);
- be alert to incidents of child abuse and neglect occurring outside the scope of the School's programs and services that may have an impact on the children and young people in the School's care; and

- create and maintain a child safe culture that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all who work for, volunteer in or access the School's programs and services.

The School requires everyone engaged with its programs and services in any capacity, regardless of their role or level of responsibility, to act to safeguard children from harm by:

- adopting its values, practices and behaviour when carrying out their roles; and
- reporting any abuse or neglect of which they become aware to:
 - the Principal;
 - external authorities responsible for child protection; and/or
 - Tasmania Police.

This expectation stands regardless of whether that abuse is being perpetrated by staff or by those outside the School - including members of the child's family, extended family, their family's extended network or strangers.

The School's commitment to safeguarding children

The School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who access its activities, programs, services or facilities. It demonstrates this commitment through policies and procedures that seek to address risks to child safety and to establish a safeguarding culture and practices. The School's policies and procedures are accessible in forms that are easy to understand, have been informed by stakeholder consultation, and are clearly communicated to children, young people and their families, staff and the general public. Policies are regularly reviewed, and endorsement is provided by the School Board. Policy updates are provided to all staff, contractors and volunteers as required.

Safeguarding children governance: responsibilities

The School has determined the following responsibilities for its staff as part of the Safeguarding Children governance structure:

The Hutchins School Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide strategic oversight to the School's safeguarding policies and procedures; • ensure that the School's safeguarding policies and procedures align with current child safety legislation and best practice; • support a child-safe culture at Board level; • monitor the effectiveness of the School's child protection strategies; • undertake Safeguarding Children training and professional development (as required); and • hold the Principal and Executive accountable for the implementation of safeguarding policies, procedures and strategies.
The Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote a strong Safeguarding Children culture across the School;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lead by example, prioritising child safety in all school activities, programs, services and decision-making; • ensure the development, implementation and regular review of safeguarding children policies and procedures; • support the integration of safeguarding children policies into the School's strategic planning and vision; • ensure that all staff receive appropriate training on child protection and safeguarding, including annual refreshers; • promote ongoing professional development relating to child safety; • ensure that clear procedures exist for reporting and responding to child protection concerns; and • support compliance with legal obligations in respect to child safety, including mandatory reporting and reportable conduct notifications.
Chief Operating Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that the School's operational processes support its safeguarding policies and obligations; • integrate child safety considerations into the School's operational planning and decision-making; • allocate resources to support effective implementation of Safeguarding measures; • ensure that School facilities are supportive of protective practices; • support compliance with child protection legislation; • support the audit process with the Australian Childhood Foundation; • ensure the development and maintenance of systems that support the reporting and management of child safety concerns; and • ensure robust record-keeping related to safeguarding incidents and actions.
The School Executive (in this context, focusing primarily on Heads and Deputy Heads of School)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote a culture of child safety within their respective sub-schools; • lead by example in adhering to and promoting safeguarding children policies and procedures; • support protective practices throughout their sub-schools; • support staff adherence to safeguarding policies and procedures; • provide support and guidance to staff on child protection issues • support student understanding (at age-appropriate levels) of the School's safeguarding children policies and procedures; • respond to, manage and record child protection concerns and incidents; • coordinate with the Principal and/or Safeguarding Children Officer on significant safeguarding concerns; and • support appropriate and ongoing child protection training for staff within their sub-schools.
The Safeguarding Children Officer (the Policy & Compliance Manager)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop, update and maintain the School's Safeguarding Children policies and procedures

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that all policies are informed by current best practice and reflective of current legislation; • ensure that all policies are compliant with the School's commitment to the Australian Childhood Foundation Safeguarding Children Program; • coordinate and deliver training programs for staff on child safety, including an annual refresher during the School's PD Week; • provide expert advice and support to staff on safeguarding matters; • serve as a point of contact for child protection concerns; • manage, review, update and ensure compliance across the School's reporting mechanisms (primarily mandatory reporting and reportable conduct); • support the management of and response to child protection incidents across the School; • monitor the effectiveness of the School's Safeguarding Children strategies; and • conduct audits and reviews of the School's Safeguarding Children strategies, as required.
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General expectations of school staff

The School requires each person involved in the delivery of services to children and young people to understand their role and the behaviour expected to safeguard children and young people. The expectations are communicated by:

- clear position descriptions that state the School's commitment to safeguarding children and the requirements for staff;
- a [Code of Conduct](#) approved and endorsed by the School Board that outlines the expectations for staff in terms of their interactions with one another and with children and young people;
- requiring all staff - whether paid or volunteer - to sign their agreement to the [Code of Conduct](#) and core Safeguarding Children policies (*see Induction and training*) through the induction process; and
- providing all staff with a copy of the [Commitment to Kindness](#), which underpins and emphasises the School's commitment to safeguarding children and young people at the School.

Recruitment and selection

The School has measures in place to minimise the likelihood of recruiting a person who is unsuitable to work or volunteer with children or young people. Recruitment procedures require that:

- the School's commitment to safeguarding children is clearly communicated in the application process;
- face-to-face interviews (or, where necessary, via video call – e.g., Skype, Zoom or Microsoft Teams) are conducted with all potential appointees;
- safeguarding related questions intended to deter inappropriate candidates and establish the School's commitment are included in all interview processes;
- a minimum of two professional reference checks are undertaken; and

- screening checks are undertaken that require candidates to provide:
 - a minimum of two professional references;
 - proof of identity;
 - evidence of Registration to Work with Vulnerable People (RWVP); and
 - (depending on position) a National Police Check.

For more information, refer to the [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#).

Induction and training

The School requires all new staff (whether paid or volunteer) to undertake an online induction process prior to commencement that provides information regarding its commitment to safeguarding children. All new staff must read and declare their acceptance of:

- the [Code of Conduct](#);
- the [Commitment to Kindness](#);
- the [Practice and Behaviour Standards](#);
- this [Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy](#);
- the [Reportable Conduct Policy](#); and
- the [Social Media Policy](#).

The induction process also includes safeguarding children training through the Australian Childhood Foundation. The ongoing extension of this education and training is supported and provided for through the School's Professional Development program.

Involving children, young people and their parents/carers

The School involves and communicates with children, young people and their families in developing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment. It provides information to children and their parents/carers (such as brochures, posters, handbooks, guidelines) about:

- the School's commitment to safeguarding children and their rights;
- the behaviour expected of our staff and of the School community; and
- the [Safeguarding Children policies and procedures](#).

The School has a number of processes for encouraging two-way communication with children and families, which are designed to actively request, collate and address feedback, facilitating effective communication and involvement.

Reportable conduct and mandatory reporting

The School's [Reportable Conduct Policy](#) has been approved and endorsed by the Board, and provided to all staff. This policy states that all staff must:

- immediately report abuse or neglect;
- raise any concerns with policies or practices that may compromise the safety of children and young people;
- report to the School any inappropriate or concerning behaviour exhibited by staff (including volunteers and contractors);
- meet all legislated reportable conduct and mandatory reporting requirements; and
- follow specified processes for reportable conduct and/or mandatory reporting.

Staff are informed that failure to report is considered serious misconduct.

All school staff receive annual refresher training on Reportable Conduct and Mandatory Reporting. The distinction between these two mechanisms is outlined as the difference between organisational and personal responsibilities. The School bears the responsibility to investigate and report any Reportable Conduct; individuals bear the responsibility to make mandatory reports as and when required under the law.

All school staff are provided with the [Reportable Conduct Policy](#) and are required to understand its implications for their role. The School maintains records of all allegations, disclosures and concerns regarding child abuse and has defined processes to ensure transparency, accountability and appropriate action.

Mandatory Reporting processes at the School are defined by the same policy; however, accountability to the School itself is not required (though it is strongly encouraged). School staff are asked to notify the Principal where a mandatory report has been made, so that the School may provide support to students, staff, and community members that are affected. Staff may notify the Principal (and create a school record) through the [Mandatory Report Notification Form](#), which may be accessed and completed by any person with the relevant [link](#).

The School has also developed an [Inappropriate or Reportable Conduct Notification Form](#) for staff conduct that may require investigation or action. Reports made via this mechanism are confidential, and are delivered to the Principal, the Chief Operating Officer and the Policy and Compliance Manager. This form allows for tracking and reporting, which ensures that where trends or patterns emerge, the School is positioned to respond and take action.

Policy and practice review

The School is committed to maintaining and improving its policies, procedures and practices to safeguard children and young people from neglect and abuse. This commitment includes the establishment of the role of 'Safeguarding Children Program Co-ordinator'.

The School monitors staff and external providers through the mechanisms outlined in this policy to encourage appropriate practice and behaviour, and to ensure that policies are adhered to. Staff are required to disclose convictions or charges affecting their suitability to work with children and young people. Registration to Work with Vulnerable People checks are conducted weekly via the School's Information Management System (Synergetic) and a PowerBI Dashboard that flags expired and expiring soon registrations. Safeguarding Children training is monitored via the same process, as is Teachers Registration certification.

The School has formally reviewed its programs and services to identify and document potential risks to children or young people. These risks are identified, addressed and mitigated according to the Risk Register (viewable in Complispace), which contains an annual review mechanism that supports the School to identify and document potential risks to children or young people.

Communicating this policy

This policy, and the other policies in the Safeguarding suite, are communicated to the School community:

- on the website;
- in age-appropriate formats for children and young people;
- in simple, age-appropriate posters around the School;
- in the School newsletter (Communique); and
- as part of the information provided to parents/carers and families.

The School's Safeguarding policies are also communicated to all involved staff:

- during recruitment and induction processes, as outlined above;
- in an annual refresher undertaken in the Staff Professional Development (PD) Week each year;
- in minimum compulsory training on safeguarding children and young people policies and procedures;
- on agendas for team meetings; and
- where there are any updates or changes.

6. Supporting/related documents

[Coaching Policy](#)

[Practice and Behaviour Standards](#)

[Code of Conduct](#)

[Mandatory Report Notification Form](#)

[Commitment to Kindness](#)

[Recruitment and Selection Policy](#)

[Complaints and Grievances Policy](#)

[Reportable Conduct Policy](#)

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy](#)

[Social Media Policy](#)

[Inappropriate or Reportable Conduct Notification Form](#)

7. Record keeping

This policy is to be kept for three (3) years until review except where significant legislative or organisational change demands otherwise.

The master copy is kept in SharePoint Online in read-only PDF form. All printed copies are uncontrolled.

8. Policy owner

The Principal

9. Version Control

Version Number	Author	Purpose/Change	Date
1.0	Manager People, Culture & Safety	Policy creation	25/11/2015
1.1	Manager People, Culture & Safety	Policy reviewed; updated to align with standard 1 of the Safeguarding Children Accreditation Program	5/6/2017
2.0	Policy & Compliance Manager	2.0 revision; major textual review. Sections rewritten for clarity, closer textual representation of current school practice.	1/2/2021
3.0	Policy & Compliance Manager	3.0 revision; major textual review. Additions for Reportable Conduct, policy significantly rewritten to be consistent with the 'voice' of the rest of the policy body and the newer practices for Reportable Conduct, Peer-on-Peer abuse, recruitment and selection and Volunteer/Contractor registration. Added information regarding the Universal Principle for Aboriginal Cultural Safety and a reference to the School's Reconciliation Action Plan. Added a section detailing the School's governance structure for Safeguarding Children.	04/2024