



THE HUTCHINS SCHOOL

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

Relevant legislation	Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997 (Tas) Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 (Tas) Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (Cth)
Commencement date	25 November 2015
Last review date	01 March 2021

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 our programs and services.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff - whether paid employees or volunteers - engaged with The Hutchins School (The School).

3. Objectives

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

4. Definitions

Bullying	Bullying is an inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person or group and is generally an act that is repeated over time. Bullying has been described by researchers as taking many forms which are often interrelated and include:
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	<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	<p>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:</p> <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	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.
Physical abuse	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, whilst not causing injury can also be considered physical abuse if they place a child at risk of being hurt.
Sexual abuse	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 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.

We promote equity and respect diversity by:

- actively anticipating children's diverse circumstances and responding effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities;
- giving all children access to information, support and complaints processes; and

- paying particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children; those with a disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Intersex (LGBTI) children, and those who are unable to live at home.

It is the responsibility of all at the School to:

- 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 our 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.

We require all within the School, regardless of their role or level of responsibility, to act to safeguard children from harm by:

- adopting the practices and behaviour we have set as our standard when carrying out their roles; and
- reporting any abuse or neglect of which they become aware to :
 - the Headmaster;
 - external authorities responsible for child protection; or
 - Tasmania Police.

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

Our commitment to safeguarding children

The School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who access the School's activities, programs, services or facilities. Our policies and procedures seek to address risks to child safety and to establish a safeguarding culture and practices. Our 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 to the general public. We regularly review our policies, obtain endorsement of any changes made and provide updated copies staff. This policy has also been reviewed and endorsed by the School Board.

Our staff know the behaviour we expect

We require that each person involved in our delivery of services to children and young people understands both their role and the behaviour we expect in relation to safeguarding children and young people. We establish and communicate those expectations by:

- utilising clear position descriptions that state the School's commitment to safeguarding children and the requirements for our staff;
- working under a [Code of Conduct](#), approved and endorsed by the School Board, that outlines the expectations of all 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 assent to our [Code of Conduct](#) and [Practice and Behaviour Standards](#) through the induction process; and
- Providing all staff with a copy of our [Commitment to Kindness](#), which underpins and emphasises our commitment to safeguarding children and young people at the School.

We minimise the likelihood of recruiting a person who is unsuitable

The School has measures in place to minimise the likelihood that we will recruit a person who is unsuitable to work or volunteer with children or young people. Our recruitment procedures require:

- that our safeguarding commitment is communicated to potential applicants for positions;
- face-to-face interviews (or, where necessary, via video call – e.g., Skype, Zoom or Microsoft Teams) to be held (which include safeguarding-related questions);
- a minimum of two professional reference checks to be undertaken; and
- screening checks to be undertaken, which require applicants to provide proof of their identity, Registration to Work with Vulnerable People (RWVP) and (depending on their position) a National Police Check.

Induction and training is part of our commitment

The School requires all new staff (whether paid or volunteer) to undertake an online induction process prior to commencement. This induction process provides them with information regarding our commitment to safeguarding children. All new staff must read and declare their acceptance of the [Code of Conduct](#) and [Practice and Behaviour Standards](#). 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 our staff professional development program.

We encourage the involvement of children, young people and their parents/carers

We involve and communicate with children, young people and their families in developing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment. We provide information to children and their parents/carers (such as brochures, posters, handbooks, guidelines) about:

- our commitment to safeguarding children and their rights;
- the behaviour we expect of our staff and of themselves; and
- our [Mandatory Reporting Policy](#).

We have processes for encouraging two-way communication with children and families. We seek their feedback and have a process for responding. We respect diversity and seek to facilitate effective communication and involvement.

Our staff understand their responsibility for reporting child abuse

Our [Mandatory Reporting Policy](#) is approved and endorsed by the School Board and applies to all our staff. The policy states that:

- staff must immediately report abuse or neglect and any concerns with policies, practices or the behaviour of staff;
- staff must meet any legislated mandatory reporting requirements;
- staff must follow a specified process when reporting abuse or neglect including who will receive reports; and
- that failure to report is considered serious misconduct.

School staff are requested to notify the Headmaster where a mandatory report has been made. Provision has been made for this process through the [Mandatory Report Notification Form](#), which may be accessed and completed by any person [with the relevant link](#).

Our staff are given a copy of and have access to the [Mandatory Reporting Policy](#) and are required to understand its implications for their role. We document any allegation, disclosure or concern regarding child abuse and monitor responses to all allegations, disclosures or concerns.

The School has also developed an [Inappropriate Conduct Report Form](#) for staff conduct that may not warrant a mandatory report, but is nonetheless unacceptable behaviour. This form is accessible from the School's Policy and Compliance site (in the 'Safeguarding Children' section), on the Human Resources site, and via Rory. Reports made via this mechanism are confidential, and are delivered in the first instance to the Policy and Compliance Manager and the Human Resources Manager, who will escalate the report if required. This form allows for tracking and reporting, which ensures that where cumulative reports, trends or patterns emerge, the School is positioned to respond and take action.

We maintain and improve our policies and practices

We are committed to maintaining and improving our policies, procedures and practices to safeguard children and young people from neglect and abuse. We have assigned responsibility for maintaining and improving our policies and procedures to a 'Safeguarding Children Program Coordinator'.

We monitor our staff and external providers to encourage appropriate practice and behaviour, and to ensure that policies are adhered to. We require our staff to disclose convictions or charges affecting their suitability to work with children and young people and we review police record and Registration for Working with Vulnerable People checks periodically.

We have formally reviewed our service delivery to identify and document potential risks to children or young people. We are committed to undertaking formal reviews at least annually in order to identify and document potential risks to children or young people associated with our programs and services.

Communicating this policy

The School is committed to ensuring that our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is communicated to our school community:

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

This policy is also communicated to all involved staff:

- during recruitment and induction processes;
- 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 to this document.

6. Supporting/related documents

[Coaching Policy](#)

[Code of Conduct](#)

[Commitment to Kindness](#)

[Complaints and Grievances Policy](#)

[Inappropriate Conduct Report Form](#)

[Practice and Behaviour Standards](#)

[Mandatory Report Notification Form](#)

[Mandatory Reporting Policy](#)

7. Record keeping

This policy is to be kept for three (3) years until review, unless there is a significant legislative or organisational change requiring earlier review.

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

8. Policy owner

Headmaster

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