



Child Safe Policy 2016

AllU's Child Safe Policy

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1. Purpose

This policy was written to demonstrate the commitment of AllU to child safety and establishing and maintaining child safe and child friendly environments.

2. Context

This policy reflects our commitment to provide a safe environment where every person has the right to be treated with respect and is safe and protected from harm.

It complies with our obligations under the *Children's Protection Act 1993*, including:

- Section 8B – 8D – child safe environments and criminal history assessments for people working with children; and
- Section 11 – Mandatory reporting.

It also complies with the Child safe environments: Principles of good practice and Child safe environments: Standards for dealing with information obtained about the criminal history of employees and volunteers who work with children issued by the Chief Executive. (Section 8A, *Children's Protection Act 1993*).

3. Scope

This policy, from the date of endorsement, applies to all people involved in the organisation, including:

- employees (permanent and casual)
- volunteers
- any other individual involved in this organisation

4. Commitment to child safety

All children involved in AllU have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people participating in our programs and the welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority. We aim to create a safe and friendly environment where all children and young people are valued and feel safe.

Our Exchange Program Manager is the primary point of contact to provide advice and support to children, parents, employees and volunteers regarding the safety and well-being of children in our organisation

5. Children's participation

AllU encourages and respects the views of children and young people who participate in our programs. We listen to, and act upon, any concerns that children, young people or their families raise with us. We provide students with information on what they can do if they feel unsafe.

We ensure that children, young people and their families know their rights and how to access the complaints procedures available to them.

We value diversity and will not tolerate any discriminatory practices.

6. Recruitment practices

AllU takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. We employ a range of screening measures and apply best practice standards in the screening and recruitment of employees and volunteers.

We conduct WWC checks for people working with children, as set out in Section 8B of the *Children's Protection Act 1993*. WWC checks are required for anyone within our organisation that:

- has regular contact with children
- works in close proximity to children on a regular basis or
- supervises or manages persons who:
 - have regular contact with children or
 - work in close proximity to children or
- has access to sensitive records relating to children or young people.

We ensure that WWC information is dealt with in accordance with the Child Safe Environments: Standards for dealing with information obtained about the criminal history of employees and volunteers who work with children, issued pursuant to Section 8A, *Children's Protection Act 1993*.

7. Code of Conduct

All members are made aware of, and must abide by, our Code of Conduct.

8. Support for employees and volunteers

AllU seeks to attract and retain the best employees and volunteers. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We ensure that employees/volunteers who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training so that their capacity is developed and enhanced to promote the establishment and maintenance of a child safe environment. Strategies we have implemented include:

- All new employees undergo training and receive a copy of our child safe policy and code of conduct.
- All employees receive regular training sessions that include a focus on ongoing learning about child protection and other matters that affect children and young people.
- A child safety officer has been appointed (Exchange Program Manager) as a first point of contact for all child protection matters.

9. Reporting and responding to suspected child abuse and neglect

AllIU will not tolerate incidents of child abuse.

All employees and volunteers understand their obligation to notify the Child Abuse Report Line on **13 14 78** as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable suspicion that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected.

We ensure that employees have access to relevant information resources such as:

- Child safe environment: Guidelines for mandated notifiers and information for organisations
- Families SA reporting child abuse website: <http://www.dfc.sa.gov.au/pub/default.aspx?tabid=485>
- Free online SMART (Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma) Learning package, developed by the Australian Childhood Foundation: www.childhood.org.au

We ensure that support is also available for the employee making the report, particularly where an ongoing service is provided to the child, young person and their family.

Supporting children, young people and their families

Child Protection is everyone's responsibility. AllIU recognises that even where a report is made, we may still have a role in supporting the child or young person. This support may include referring the child, young person or their family to other appropriate services

Dealing with reports or concerns relating to the actions of an employee or volunteer of our organisation

In addition to making a report to the Child Abuse Report Line, employees and volunteers must also report to Exchange Program Manager if reasonable suspicion is formed that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected by another member, employee, or volunteer.

In response to any report to management concerning a member, employee or volunteer of this organisation, management may determine to take disciplinary action.

Other protective actions may also be introduced to ensure the safety of children and young people within our organisation.

10. Strategies to minimise risk

Policies and procedures may address (but are not limited to):

- Transportation
- Taking images of children
- Supervision of children
- Complaints procedures
- Physical contact
- Responsibilities
- Procedure for breaches of policy
- Training/cyber safe guidelines
- Protecting privacy and confidentiality
- Procedures for dealing with situations where a member is being investigated for, or is charged with, a serious criminal offence.

Evaluation of these strategies and the development of additional strategies to minimise and control risks to children and young people occur as part of our ongoing risk management process.

11. Harassment/bullying

AllU opposes all forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying. We take this issue seriously and encourage anyone who believes that they, or another person, has been harassed, discriminated against or bullied to raise this issue with AllU or management.

12. Communication

AllU will ensure that everyone to whom this policy applies is aware of and has had an opportunity to read the policy.

We also ask employees, volunteers and parents (where appropriate) to sign a written statement indicating that they have read and will abide by our child-safe policy. We retain a copy of all signed statements.

Conducting criminal history assessments

Assessments required for prescribed positions

All employees and volunteers of AllU who occupy a prescribed position (as set out under Section 8B (8) of the *Children's Protection Act 1993*) are required to undergo a criminal history assessment once every three years.

Criminal history assessments are also required prior to the appointment of new employees or members to prescribed positions.

Exemptions from this requirement may apply in some circumstances (see below). However AllU retains the discretion to decide on a case-by-case basis whether any relevant exemptions will be exercised.

This requirement applies to all employees who regularly work with or around children in an unsupervised capacity or have access to prescribed records relating to children.

In accordance with its legal requirements, AllU will retain the following information regarding its decision:

- That a criminal history report was obtained
- How the criminal history information affected decision making processes
- Statutory declarations (where applicable)

Child Protection guidelines for employees and volunteers of AIU

Caring for children and young people brings additional responsibilities for employees and volunteers of this organisation.

All employees and volunteers of this organisation are responsible for promoting the safety and well-being of children and young people by:

- Ensuring the safety and welfare of the child or young person is paramount at all times.
- Treating all children and young people with dignity, equality and respect.
- Adhering to this organisation's child safe policy at all times.
- Listening and responding appropriately to the views and concerns of children and young people within the organisation.
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people within the organisation.
- Ensuring children and young people understand their rights and explaining to the child in age-appropriate language what they can expect when participating in a service, activity or program offered by the organisation.
- Responding quickly, fairly and transparently to any serious complaints made by a child, young person or their parent/guardian.
- Notifying the **Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78** as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable suspicion that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected.

Employees/volunteers will not:

- Take part in any unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person.
- Discriminate against any child or young person because of age, gender, cultural background, religion, vulnerability or sexuality.
- Develop any 'special' relationships with children or young people outside of the professional relationship.