

Child Safe Environment Procedure

1. Policy Title

Child Safe Environment Policy

2. Preamble

The *Children's Protection Act 1993* requires organisations providing certain services to children create and maintain a child safe environment. In this context, a child safe environment is one which protects children from abuse and harm. Also included is the requirement under the law for certain people to report suspected abuse and neglect.

Carclew is committed to the fundamental legal and moral responsibilities of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children participating in its programs. Management and employees of Carclew are dedicated to providing a safe environment and the right for all children to be treated with respect and to be safe and protected from abuse.

3. Definitions

Mandated Notifier/Mandatory Reporter: Any person who delivers services to children or young people.

CARL: Child Abuse Report Line

DECD: Department for Education and Child Development

DCSI: Department for Communities and Social Inclusion

Relevant History Screening: Child-Related Employment Screening or National Police Clearance.

RAN-EC: Responding to Abuse and Neglect – Education Care

Limited Confidentiality: some legal requirements, such as mandatory reporting, which override a child or young person's right to confidentiality.

4. Reporting suspect abuse or neglect

As an employee or volunteer who provides services and is engaged in the delivery of those services to children/young people we have a legal responsibility to report child abuse. Child protection is the responsibility of the whole community and we all have a moral responsibility to report any incidents of child abuse or neglect.

The following procedures will assist Carclew staff members with reporting suspected child abuse or neglect if such a claim is reported. Specific matters covered in these procedures are expanded in more detail, and brought into operation by the additional information attached.

4.1 Roles and responsibilities

- All Board members, staff, artists, volunteers and residents engaged with Carclew have an individual responsibility for appropriate behaviour towards children/young people and compliance with the policy.
- It is your personal responsibility as a Mandated Notifier to notify the Department for Child Protection by calling the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78 (24 hour service) when you have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child/young person has been abused or neglected. It is not the responsibility of your manager or employer.
- Carclew is committed to promoting the safety and wellbeing of children, therefore requiring all recommended applicants for positions, existing staff, artists and volunteers who have contact with children or work in close proximity to children on a regular basis undergo the appropriate employment clearance screening every three years.
- Carclew also ensures that the correct training about child protection responsibilities has been completed prior to working with or in the close proximity of children; or within a South

Australian government educational site and service. *For further information please refer to the Employment Clearance for Working with Children Policy and Procedure.*

4.1.1 Carclew Board

It is the Carclew Board's responsibility to ensure:

- The protection of children/young people from abuse or neglect.
- Prompt response to advice received from the Chief Executive or other sources in relation to any suspected case of abuse or neglect.
- Regular review of the effectiveness of the policy.
- Any reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect is reported immediately.
- Staff and all parties involved are supported if such a case is reported.
- Confidentiality is maintained throughout the entire process, in accordance with legislation.

4.1.2 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is accountable to the Board and is responsible for ensuring that:

- The policy is implemented, monitored, reviewed and reported against.
- The recruitment and selection of staff/artists/volunteers is carried out in accordance with Carclew's Employment Clearance for Working with Children Policy and Procedure.
- Promote acceptable behaviour when dealing with children/young people.
- Any reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect is reported immediately.
- Staff and all parties involved are supported if such a case is reported.
- Confidentiality is maintained throughout the entire process, in accordance with legislation.

4.1.3 Manager/Supervisor

Manager/Supervisors are accountable to the Chief Executive and are responsible for ensuring that:

- The recruitment and selection of staff/artists/volunteers is carried out in accordance with Carclew's Employment Clearance for Working with Children Policy and Procedure.
- New staff/artists/volunteers receive appropriate induction and ongoing training as required.
- Promote acceptable behaviour when dealing with children/young people.
- Any reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect is reported immediately.
- Staff and all parties involved are supported if such a case is reported.
- Confidentiality is maintained throughout the entire process, in accordance with legislation.

4.1.4 Mandated Notifiers

Mandated Notifiers are obliged under the *Children's Protection Act 1993* to notify the Department for Child Protection when you have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child/young person has been abused or neglected.

- Whilst the obligations to report suspicions rests with Mandated Notifiers, they are encouraged to seek advice and support from a social worker by calling the CARL on 13 14 78 (24 hour service) or their manager/supervisor.

4.2 Process for reporting suspect abuse or neglect

If you are unsure whether you have a suspicion on reasonable grounds to notify, it is appropriate to consult with a social worker by calling the CARL on 13 14 78 (24 hour service). The role of the Department for Child Protection is to assess the notification and determine whether action is warranted.

- As a Mandated Notifier you are obliged to notify the Department for Child Protection when you have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child/young person has been abused or

neglected. Reasonable grounds to notify suspected abuse or neglect might include the following:

- When a child/young person tells you that he/she has been abused.
 - When your own observation of a particular child/young person's behaviour and/or injuries generally leads you to suspect that abuse is/has occurred.
 - A child/young person tells you he/she knows someone who has been abused. The child/young person could possibly be referring to themselves.
 - When someone else, who is in a position to provide reliable information, informs you that abuse / neglect is occurring. This person may be a relative, friend, neighbour or sibling.
 - The child/young person's basic physical and emotional needs are not being met or are at risk of not being met.
- You may get this information in the following ways:
 - Child/young person may tell you something.
 - An employee/volunteer or participant may tell you something.
 - Someone else may tell you something.
 - You may observe something.
 - If an incident is brought to your attention you should take confidential notes on what you have observed and report the incident to the CARL. You are not required to, but may consult your supervisor/manager for support and advice.
 - The social worker taking your call at CARL may ask you for the following information:
 - Details of all people involved including the child/young person and your details.
 - The reason for believing that the injury or behaviour is the result of abuse or neglect.
 - An assessment of the immediate danger to the child/young person.
 - Description of the incident.
 - Information about the family of the child/young person.
 - Any specific cultural details or other details, which will help care for the child/young person.
 - If a report is made against a staff member, the Carclew Board and Chief Executive may decide to make a temporary change to employment /volunteering arrangements to attempt to balance the needs of:
 - The ongoing safety of children/young people
 - Any investigations
 - Maintaining privacy to all involved, and ensuring that reputations are not damaged.

Please consult the Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure for breaches of conduct.

4.3 Ongoing role of Mandated Notifier making the report

After making a notification you may have some ongoing responsibilities such as:

- Acting as a support person for the child/young person.
- Attending and participating in case meetings.
- Providing written report of incident if required.

5. Legislation

- *Children's Protection Act 1993*
- *Children's Protection Regulations 2010*
- *The South Australian Public Sector Act 2009*
- *South Australian Public Sector Employees Code of Conduct March 2009*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2012*

6. Additional Information

Important information can be found on the Department for Child Protection website <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/>, Department for Education and Child Development website www.decd.sa.gov.au or Department for Communities and Social Inclusion website www.dcsi.sa.gov.au.