

Aspect Motion School of Dance and O'Connor School of Irish Dance Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Aspect Motion School of Dance and O'Connor School of Irish Dancing acknowledges the Wurundjeri People, the Traditional Owners of the land on which we operate. We acknowledge and respect their contributions, experience and knowledge as First Nations people. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy was adopted by the Aspect Motion School of Dance (Aspect Motion) and O'Connor School of Irish Dance (O'Connor) on 1st January 2023.. It demonstrates the strong commitment of staff and volunteers to child safety and wellbeing, and how our organisation keeps children safe from harm, including child abuse.

Our organisation is committed to child safety.

Aspect Motion and O'Connor are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse. We are committed to creating and maintaining a child-safe and child-friendly organisation where all children and young people are valued and protected from abuse.

All children and young people regardless of their age, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religious beliefs, ability and family background who come to Aspect Motion and O'Connor have the right to be protected from harm and to be treated with dignity and respect. We are an inclusive organisation that recognises and respects diversity, and we are committed to proactively supporting and building the cultural safety and inclusion of all children and young people at Aspect Motion and O'Connor. We aim to create a child safe and child-friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun while enjoying learning dance and performing arts.

We recognise the distinctive history and experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and respect and observe their cultural rights. We are committed to creating a culturally safe and inclusive environment in which the diverse and unique identities, experiences and cultural rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are respected and valued.

As a child safe organisation, we are committed to providing welcoming, safe and accessible environments where all children and young people feel valued, are listened to, and are genuinely considered and involved in decisions that affect their lives.

The wellbeing and safety of the children and young people in our care will always be our priority. We have specific policies, procedures and practices in place to support our people to achieve these commitments.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children. Aspect Motion School of Dance and O'Connor School of Irish Dance core values clearly support this commitment

Fun & Engaging: Our classes and activities are underpinned by this value. For students to derive the most benefit and learn they must enjoy what they are doing! Our pre-school and junior program is underpinned by the notion that children learn best through play.

Inclusive: We genuinely believe that dance is for everyone. We will work in partnership with parents and students to ensure that class placement is appropriate, and we deliver content in a way that meets the needs of learners.

Community: Aspect Motion and O'Connor are a community; we foster supportive and nurturing connections amongst our staff team, families and students. We will always look for ways to engage our students and families in local activities that promote dance and our students. We believe that Aspect Motion and O'Connor contribute to the vibrancy and social fabric of the local community, particularly for young people.

Excellence: Staff are committed to ongoing training and development. Our professional associations with the Australian Teacher of Dance, Australian Irish Dancing Association, An Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha (The Irish Dancing Commission) and Acrobatic Arts ensure that we remain up to date with best practice. We will never stop learning!

Purpose

This Policy outlines how Aspect Motion and O'Connor prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and what steps we will take to do this.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, children and other individuals involved in our organisation. This policy applies to all activities – classes, rehearsals, in studio events and performances – conducted by Aspect Motion and O'Connor.

Definitions

Child abuse means:

- a sexual offence committed against a child
- an offence committed against a child under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), such as grooming
- physical violence against a child
- causing serious emotional or psychological harm to a child
- serious neglect of a child.

Harm is damage to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, including as a result of child abuse by adults or the conduct of other children. It includes physical, emotional, sexual and psychological harm. Harm can arise from a single act or event and can also be cumulative, that is, arising as a result of a series of acts or events over a period of time.

Child/Children means a person who is under the age of 18 years.

Concerns and complaints

A concern refers to any potential issue that could impact negatively on the safety and wellbeing of children.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction to Aspect Motion and/or O'Connor related to one or more of the following:

- our services or dealings with individuals
- allegations of abuse or misconduct by a staff member, a volunteer or another individual associated with Aspect Motion and/or O'Connor
- disclosures of abuse or harm made by a child or young person
- the conduct of a child or young person at Aspect Motion and or O'Connor
- the inadequate handling of a prior concern
- general concerns about the safety of a group of children or activity.

Role of the Principal

- The principal has the role of making sure Aspect Motion and O'Connor prioritises children's safety and that action is taken when anyone raises concerns about children's safety.
- The principal will champion and model a child safe culture at Aspect Motion and O'Connor. We encourage anyone involved with the organisation to report a child safety concern. The principal will work to create a positive culture around reporting so that people feel comfortable to raise concerns.
- Everyone at Aspect Motion and O'Connor have a role in identifying and managing risks of child abuse and harm. The principal will make sure that staff and volunteers are conducting risk assessments and taking action to manage risks in accordance with this policy. They will also ensure that appropriate child safety training for staff and volunteers is identified and completed.
- The principal will conduct an annual review of how effectively Aspect Motion and O'Connor are delivering child safety and wellbeing.

Children's empowerment and participation

- Aspect Motion and O'Connor are a child-centred organisation. We actively seek to include children's views and ideas in our organisational planning, delivery of services including rehearsals and performances, and management of facilities.
- We want children to develop new friends through Aspect Motion and O'Connor and encourage children to be supportive of each other. We do not tolerate bullying or abusive behaviour between children and take action if this occurs.
- We respect the rights of children and provide them with information about their rights including the right to be safe at Aspect Motion and O'Connor. We actively seek to understand what makes children feel safe in our organisation.
- Aspect Motion and O'Connor values the voices of children and will act on safety concerns raised by children or their families. Aspect Motion and O'Connor support children's participation in the following ways:
 - Regular discussions with children, including child-led conversations on what makes them feel safe and unsafe.
 - A suggestion box for children that is regularly emptied with suggestions assessed and acted on where appropriate. Children are provided with feedback on their suggestions.
 - Information provided to children and families about Aspect Motion and O'Connor's operations, staffing and programs are made suitable for different age groups and diversity of the children.

Families and communities

Aspect Motion and O'Connor recognises the important role of families and involves parents and carers when making significant decisions about their child. Parents, families and communities are welcome to provide feedback at any time through our contact email address and are encouraged to raise any concerns they have with us.

Aspect Motion and O'Connor provides information to families and community about our child safe policies and practices including through:

- publishing this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct on our website
- including information about our child safety approach in Aspect Motion and O'Connor's information booklet
- including articles and information on child safety and wellbeing, and reminders about our policies and procedures, at various times throughout the year.

Creating culturally safe environments for all Aboriginal children and their families

Aspect Motion and O'Connor are committed to creating environments where Aboriginal culture is celebrated and Aboriginal children, families and community members are welcomed and included. Strategies to embed cultural safety for Aboriginal children include:

- an Acknowledgement of Country at all performances
- consulting with families and members of the Aboriginal community to identify opportunities to promote Aboriginal culture and practices in the Aspect Motion and O'Connor studios and programs
- providing opportunities for children to share their cultural identity and express their culture, including through performance and during Aspect Motion and O'Connor's community activities
- supporting children who wish to explore their culture, including consulting with their family and relevant Aboriginal organisations
- providing training for staff and volunteers on the strengths of Aboriginal culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children
- celebrating NAIDOC Week and acknowledging significant events including National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week
- seeking feedback from Aboriginal children, families and communities on their experience at Aspect Motion and O'Connor, particularly how safe they feel expressing their identity including their culture.

Valuing diversity

We value diversity and equity for all children. To achieve this we:

- provide training for all staff and regular volunteers on understanding diversity and how to support inclusion and cultural safety
- welcome and support participation of all children, including children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, LGBTIQ children and Aboriginal children and their families
- offer students and families through our enrolment forms the opportunity to provide information about themselves, including any specific needs to participate fully in our programs
- have zero tolerance of racism and other forms of discrimination and take action when discrimination or exclusion is identified
- deliver classes that reflects the diversity of our students, their interests, and cultures
- strive to reflect the diversity of our community through representation in our staff members
- acknowledge and celebrate important cultural dates in our classes
- have a physical and online environment that actively celebrates diversity
- commit to ensuring our facilities and online activities promote inclusion of children of all abilities.

Code of Conduct

- Aspect Motion and O'Connor have a Child Safe Code of Conduct. Staff and volunteers must comply with the Code of Conduct at all times. Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action including termination of a person's involvement with the organisation.
- All third-party contractors are also expected to abide by the Child Safe Code of Conduct, and where they are engaging with children will have to sign an agreement to comply with the code, prior to delivering any services.

Recruiting staff and volunteers

- Aspect Motion and O'Connor puts child safety and wellbeing at the center of recruitment and screening processes for staff. We only recruit staff who are appropriate to engage with children.
- We require a Working with Children Check and referee checks for all staff and a Working with Children Check for volunteers who have a role with children. We require staff to have appropriate qualifications for their roles and check to make sure these qualifications are valid.

Supporting staff and volunteers

- Aspect Motion and O'Connor is committed to ensuring that all staff and volunteers receive training to ensure they understand their responsibilities in relation to child safety and to support their engagement with children. Aspect Motion and O'Connor assists its staff and volunteers to incorporate child safety considerations into decisions and to promote a safe environment where children are empowered to speak up about issues that affect them.
- Staff and volunteers will receive supervision to support their engagement with children and for compliance with our Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- Issues or concerns about behaviour with children will be raised immediately and addressed in line with our Code of Conduct, complaint handling policy and disciplinary policy.

Information sharing

Aspect Motion and O'Connor may share relevant information to promote the safety and wellbeing of children, where it is appropriate and in their best interests. Aspect Motion and O'Connor will keep information about complaints confidential, except where it is necessary to share information to respond properly to a complaint or to prioritise child safety. We may also need to share information about incidents or complaints with external authorities to comply with the law or to prioritise safety.

Risk management

- We recognise the importance of identifying and managing risks of child harm and abuse in the physical and online environments operated by Aspect Motion and O'Connor.
- We conduct regular risk assessments and have a risk management plan to address the risk of child abuse and harm at Aspect Motion and O'Connor. The risk management plan will be developed in consultation with our staff, volunteers, parent representatives and children. We will ensure that any risk controls put in place balance the need to manage harm with the benefits of participating at Aspect Motion and O'Connor.
- Any contractors or other providers of services will always be supervised by a member of staff while working with us to ensure child safety. See also Code of Conduct above.

Non-compliance with this policy and the Code of Conduct

Aspect Motion and O'Connor will enforce this policy, the Code of Conduct and any other child safety and wellbeing policies (see list below). Potential breaches by anyone will be investigated and may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination of employment or engagement or other corrective action. More information can be found in our disciplinary policy.

Review

Aspect Motion and O'Connor will review all child safe practices and policies at least every two years. We also review relevant practices and policies in response to a child safety incident or 'near miss'. Findings from reviews will be reported to the people involved in our organisation and also inform our approach to continuous improvement of our child safety practices.

- the positive complaints culture is actively fostered with staff and volunteers at each level of the organisation.

Child Safety Incident Procedures

The four steps that all AMSD personnel (i.e. employees, volunteers, students) must follow regarding **any Child Safety Incident** (including child safety complaints about AMSD) are:

1. Recognise
2. Respond
3. Report
4. Support

1. Recognise

AMSD may become aware of an incident, allegation or suspicion of child abuse or harm (either by adults or by other children) in a number of ways, such as:

- a complaint is made through AMSD's complaints process;
- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves);
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed.
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it;
- observing suspicious behaviour;

Signs that may indicate a child is being abused

Sometimes a child may tell us if they are being harmed, and at other times we will need to look out for signs that may indicate a child is being abused, such as changes in behaviour, emotions or physical appearance.

Common behavioural indicators / signs across the different types of child abuse and harm include:

- unusual or regressive changes in behaviour, like a sudden decline in academic performance, anxiety, withdrawal, hyperactivity, bedwetting, sleep disturbances, drug or alcohol misuse
- concerning behaviours that may be harmful to themselves or others
- being extremely sensitive and alert to their surroundings (hypervigilance)
- absences from school without reasonable explanation
- frequent headaches or stomach pains
- drawings or writing which depict violence or abuse
- raising a concern about a friend or someone they know
- attempted suicide or self-harm
- unexplained or inconsistent, vague, or unlikely explanations for an injury
- unexplained bruising, fractures or other physical injuries
- unusual fear of physical contact
- harm to others or animals
- wariness or fear of someone including a parent, carer, other adult or child
- trying to protect friends or other family members from someone
- reluctance to go home
- the child is assessed as having experienced a significant delay in their emotional or intellectual development or that their functioning has been impaired
- taking on a caring or parental role with siblings prematurely.

Watch for any changes in the child's general mood. The child may become anxious, irritable, depressed, angry, or show a combination of emotions. However, do not assume that just because you see these signs the child is being abused - these signs can apply to a child under stress and may not be related to abuse.

2. Respond

Children and young people raising complaints and safety concerns or disclose abuse should be treated with sensitivity and given support.

AMSD staff will prevent or reduce further harm to those impacted by the incident by:

- Calling Emergency Services on 000 if a child is at immediate risk of harm
- Making the surroundings safe to prevent immediate recurrence of the incident, for example:
 - removing potentially harmful person(s)
 - increasing supervision of children and young people
 - moving uninvolved children and young people away from the incident
 - move to a safe place
 - alerting others to risks that extend beyond the local environment,
- Providing immediate care and support to the child/young person and others involved in the incident by addressing:
 - physical wellbeing e.g. providing first aid
 - emotional/psychological wellbeing e.g. arranging for coverage of duties and supervision
 - facilitating access to counselling for AMSD staff

If a child or young person raises a child safety complaint or concern, including disclosing abuse, AMSD staff will:

- Let them child talk about their concerns in their own time and in their own words. Give them full attention, time and a quiet space in which to do this
- Listen to the allegation or disclosure supportively, without judgement or dispute
- Maintain a calm appearance and do not be afraid of saying the 'wrong' thing
- Be supportive, reassuring and comforting if they are upset
- Tell them you believe them, it is not their fault and that they were right to tell you
- Ask open-ended questions to clarify the basic details, without seeking detailed information or asking suggestive or leading questions
- Let them know you will act on this information, that you may need to let other people know, and explain why that is the case. Do not promise to keep any information a secret.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep
- Write down what the child told you as soon as you can, using their words as best as you can remember.
- Take note of their behaviour and appearance at the time
- Take notes of physical evidence, for example, bruising if the child shows you
- Help the child and their family to get appropriate support, such as counselling
- Thank or commend them for raising the concern and tell them that AMSD will take immediate action in response to the disclosure / allegation
- Report the matter as per the Reporting Obligations and Procedures outlined next in this Policy.

In your responses you will need to consider the specific needs of the child or young person. Consider the unique qualities of the child including, for example, whether the child is, or may be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, has a disability, identifies as LGBTIQ+, has a culturally and linguistically diverse background and/or is unable to live at home.

3. Report

Once the immediate response is completed, AMSD staff will report Child Safety Incidents by:

1. Following the **Child Safety Incident Reporting Process for AMSD Staff**; and
2. Fulfilling the relevant **Reporting Obligations and Procedures** detailed below.

Reporting Obligations and Procedures

AMSD staff must report Child Safety Incidents in accordance with the relevant reporting obligations and procedures outlined below, each time they become aware of any further grounds for the reasonable belief of abuse or harm.

Internal Reporting

AMSD Staff must report **ALL Child Safety Incidents** internally, by:

- notifying the principal verbally as soon as possible.
- completing a **Child Safety Incident Report Form**, and
- submitting the completed form to AMSD's **Child Safety Coordinator** by email at tracy@aspectmotiondance.com as soon as possible - within 24 hours of the incident.

If AMSD staff become aware of a Child Safety Incident via **AMSD's Customer Complaints Process or any other complaints process**, they must complete a Child Safe Incident Report Form by transferring the information contained within the complaint to that form and providing any other relevant information available and submit it as above.

External Reporting

AMSD Staff are subject to legal obligations regarding reporting child abuse, harm or other child-related misconduct to external authorities, which are outlined below. The external reporting obligations for each Child Safety Incident will depend on the nature and circumstances of that incident. Sometimes it may not be a legal requirement for AMSD to report a complaint or concern to external authorities, but it may still be advisable to report so the safety of children can be prioritised. At all times, child safety must be AMSD's main consideration when considering reporting to external authorities.

Alleged or suspected criminal conduct

Physical or sexual abuse, including grooming, of children is a crime and should be reported to the police. Family violence, regardless of if a child has been physically or sexually abused, is serious, affects children in the family and often involves criminal behaviour. If a concern relates to family violence it should be reported to the police. If anyone is in imminent or immediate danger, call 000 immediately.

Failure to disclose a sexual offence

If an adult reasonably believes a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16, they must report it to Victoria Police by calling 000 or going to their local police station. Failure to disclose the information may be a criminal offence. The offence applies to all adults in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children, unless they have a 'reasonable excuse' or are exempt.

Reportable Conduct Scheme

AMSD must comply with reporting obligations under Victoria's Reportable Conduct Scheme. The Scheme requires heads of organisations to notify the Commission about any reportable allegations that an organisation's workers or volunteers have committed child abuse or child-related misconduct within three days of becoming aware of the allegation. For details on how to notify the Commission about a reportable allegation, see <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme/about-reporting-allegations/> The organisation must also investigate these allegations (after receiving clearance by Victoria Police) and report its findings together with any actions taken to the Commission.

Child Safety Incident Reporting Process for AMSD Personnel**WHO** must report?

AMSD Staff

Volunteers

Students

WHAT to report?**Any Child Safety Incident (i.e. all child safety concerns or complaints), including:**

- Direct or indirect disclosure of child abuse or harm (i.e. sexual, physical, emotional, psychological, neglect, grooming or exposure to family violence)
- Allegation, suspicion or observation of child abuse or harm
- Breach of AMSD's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, including the Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child safety complaints against AMSD or its personnel
- Environmental risks that could increase the likelihood of abuse occurring

Call 000 without delay if child is in immediate danger**HOW** to report?**Notify the Principal verbally as soon as possible to:**

1. Determine what **immediate action** needs to take place to protect the child or young person from harm (or further harm), including whether the Police or Child Protection need to be contacted ASAP;
2. Start completing a **Child Safety Incident Report Form**, which will provide guidance on whether a report also needs to be made to any external authorities;
3. Decide if **further advice** is needed about how to proceed.

If further advice is needed during business hours, contact one of AMSD's **Child Safety Contact Officers**, who are suitability trained and experienced staff that can provide advice on child safety matters and reporting requirements. They are:

- Tracy Coutts
- Olivia Malyon
- Chelsea Hyde
- Shardee Worroll

OR if after hours, contact Tracy.

THEN:

4. Report the incident to all required **external authorities** as guided by the Child Safety Incident Report Form - EXCEPT for Reportable Conduct notifications to the Commission for Children and Young People, which must be done by Tracy.
5. **Complete and submit the Child Safety Incident Report Form** (including details of all external reports made) to AMSD's **Child Safety Coordinator** by email at tracy@aspectmotiondance.com - no later than 24 hrs after incident.

4. Support

AMSD will provide appropriate post-incident support to those impacted by the incident, such as:

- The child / young person and their family (this includes any specific support needs for those who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander; Culturally and Linguistically Diverse; LGBTIQ+; have a disability; or are unable to live at home)
- Other children or young people who witnessed the incident
- Any AMSD staff or volunteers who witnessed and/or reported the incident, or are otherwise impacted by the incident
- Any AMSD staff or volunteer against whom a complaint is made.

Post-incident support options include:

- Facilitating a referral to appropriate community support services for any children, young people or family members involved in or impacted by the incident, such as:
 - Orange Door (www.orangedoor.vic.gov.au), formerly Child FIRST, which is the new access point for women, children and young people who are experiencing family violence, and families who need assistance regarding the care and wellbeing of their children or young people
 - Specialist services to ensure that culturally appropriate supports are put in place once a report is made, including services such as Aboriginal Child and Family Welfare Organisations, CALD Support or Advocacy Services, Disability Support Services and Victims of Crime Support Services.
- Facilitating access to incident debriefing or counselling for AMSD staff who report (or are impacted by) Child Safety Incidents

AMSD staff and volunteers who are aware of the incident will be reminded that:

- Any allegation does not mean the person is guilty, and that the allegation will be properly investigated and will include the right to 'procedural fairness'; and
- They are not to discuss the matter with any person, except as directed by police, child protection authorities and/or AMSD's Child Safety Coordinator, or unless required or authorised to do so by law, and only in direct relation to investigation of the allegation.

Child Safety Person

- AMSD has four trained child safety persons with responsibility for responding to any child safety related complaints or concerns.
- Child safety persons are introduced to children so they know and understand who the appointed officers are, and how and when they may contact them. Photos and names of the child safety persons are displayed on our noticeboard and in our newsletters.

Record keeping

- AMSD is committed to making and keeping full and accurate records about all child-related complaints or safety concerns.
- All child safety complaints, concerns, incidents and near misses will be recorded in the incident reporting system.
- Records which may assist with the investigation of a complaint or safety concern will be identified and kept as part of the record of an investigation. Records will be kept even if an investigation does not substantiate a complaint.
- We will record and keep the outcome of any investigations, and the resolution of any complaints. This includes findings made, reasons for decisions and actions taken.

Supporting documents – Aspect Motion School of Dance child safety and wellbeing system

- The following policies and procedures work together to support child safety and wellbeing across all of our operations:
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Code of Conduct
- complaint handling policy
- recruitment and screening policy
- risk management plan

Supporting legislation

- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)* (including Child Safe Standards)
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)* (including reporting to Child Protection)
- *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)* (including Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose offences)
- *Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic)* (including Part XIII – Organisational liability for child abuse)

Glossary of Terms

Aboriginal

The term Aboriginal in this Policy is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Child/ren

In this Policy the term child or children includes both children and young people under the age of 18 years.

Child abuse

Child abuse is defined in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)* as including:

- a sexual offence committed against a child
- an offence committed against a child under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), such as grooming
- physical violence against a child
- causing serious emotional or psychological harm to a child
- serious neglect of a child.

Child safe organisation

A child safe organisation is one that creates a culture, adopts strategies and takes action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people.

A child safe organisation consciously and systematically:

- Creates an environment where children's safety and wellbeing is at the centre of thought, values and actions.
- Places emphasis on genuine engagement with and valuing of children and young people.
- Creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people.
- Creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm.
- Responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm.

Child Safe Standards

The Victorian Child Safe Standards are a compulsory framework that support organisations to promote the safety of children by requiring them to implement policies to prevent, respond to and report allegations of child abuse and harm. New updated Standards were released by the Victorian Government in 2021 and apply from 1 July 2022.

Child safety

In the context of the Child Safe Standards, 'child safety' means measures to protect a child from child abuse or harm.

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

A Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy clarifies the organisation's expectations about child safety and wellbeing systems and practices and how the organisation is meeting the Standards. The policy holds staff and the organisation to account and may include statements to children, families, staff, volunteers and the community that an organisation is committed to child safety and wellbeing, as well as describing how that commitment will be met.

Child Safety Contact Officer

A Child Safety Contact Officer is a nominated person, or persons, that people within the organisation's community can go to with any child safety concerns or complaints. Their contact details are widely advertised around the organisation.

Communities

Communities means a group of people with whom a child shares common interests, experiences, social background, nationality, culture, beliefs or identity.

Cultural rights

Cultural rights are the rights of each child (either individually or as part of a group of people) to develop and express their background, customs, social behaviour, language, religion or spirituality, beliefs and way of living. Aboriginal people have distinct cultural rights to enjoy their identity and culture; maintain the use of their language; maintain their kinship ties; and maintain their relationship with the land, waters and other resources with which they have a connection under traditional laws and customs.

Cultural safety

Cultural safety is the positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination and more than 'cultural awareness' and 'cultural sensitivity'. It empowers people and allows them to contribute and feel safe to be themselves.

Culturally and linguistically diverse

Culturally and linguistically diverse is a broad and inclusive term for communities with diverse language, ethnic background, nationality, dress, traditions, food, societal structures, art and religion characteristics.¹

Culturally and linguistically diverse does not usually include Aboriginal communities and people because of their distinct history and experience as Australia's First Nations people. For the purposes of the Standards there are specific considerations for Aboriginal children, however, we also acknowledge the cultural and linguistic diversity of Aboriginal communities.

Direct contact

Any contact between a person and a child that involves:

- physical contact; or
- face to face contact; or
- contact by post or other written communication; or
- contact by telephone or other oral communication; or
- contact by email or other electronic communication.

Disability

Disability means:

- the total or partial loss of a body part or a bodily function (such as mobility, sight or hearing)
- the presence in the body of organisms that may cause disease
- malformation or disfigurement
- a mental or psychological disease or disorder
- learning difficulties.

Disability may be permanent, non-permanent or an increased chance of developing a disability in future.

Disability also includes behaviour that may be a symptom or expression of disability even if that disability is not formally diagnosed.

Disclosure

A disclosure in the context of child safety is the process by which a child conveys or attempts to convey that they are being, or have been, abused. Disclosure can be verbal, non-verbal or indicated through behaviour. A disclosure may be accidental or intentional, partial or complete and victims may disclose in different ways to different people throughout their lives.

Adults may also convey that they were abused as a child or that they may have perpetrated abuse.

Duty of care

AMSD has a duty of care that is reasonable to prevent the abuse of a child by an individual associated with AMSD while the child is under AMSD's care, supervision, or authority.

Empowerment

Empowerment is building up children and strengthening their confidence in themselves and in an organisation. It involves equipping children with the skills and knowledge to make informed decisions and enabling them to increase control of their lives.

Equity

Equity is a state of fairness in which all children are equal and can participate fully and safely in an organisation, regardless of their background, characteristics or beliefs. This requires that organisations understand that some children have different needs and may require different supports or assistance to feel safe, well and to participate fully.

Families

Families means people who make up the family unit for a child. Families may be made up of a wide variety of relationships, including those who are related by blood, marriage, adoption, kinship structures or other extended family structures. Families may include people who share in the daily tasks of living or share a very close, personal relationship.

Harm

Harm is damage to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child, including as a result of child abuse by adults or the conduct of other children. It includes physical, emotional, sexual and psychological harm. Harm can arise from a single act or event and can also be cumulative, that is, arising as a result of a series of acts or events over a period of time.

Inclusive environment

Organisations with an inclusive environment:

- value all children
- respect their rights
- challenge all forms of discrimination

- understand and respond to the needs and capabilities of all children and their families, including Aboriginal children and their families
- adjust their approaches to ensure all children feel safe, welcome and can participate.

Mandatory reporting

In accordance with the *Children Youth and Families Act*, the legal obligation of certain groups of people to report a reasonable belief of child physical or sexual abuse to child protection authorities.

Online environments

Online environments are any technological platforms which an organisation uses or controls, such as computers, phones, websites, intranet, social media and video conference facilities regardless of where such platforms may be accessed by children.

Participation

Participation refers to opportunities for children to have their say and to inform decision-making. This includes engaging children in conversation where ideas are shared. This requires organisations to listen, to hear and to make appropriate changes based on what children share.

Policies

Policies are the documented rules, expectations and positions of the organisation.

Practices

Practices are the rules, expectations, actions or processes that are commonly or usually done by, or within, the organisation, regardless of whether those rules, expectations, actions or processes are written down.

Procedures

Procedures are the documented actions and processes that put into operation the organisation's policies.

Processes

Processes are a systematic series of actions directed at achieving a particular outcome.

Reasonable belief

A belief is considered 'reasonable' if a reasonable person, doing the same work, would have formed the same belief on those grounds. Grounds for forming a belief are matters of which you have become aware, and any opinions in relation to those matters.

Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be as follows:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves);
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed;
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it; and/or
- observing suspicious behaviour.

Reportable allegation

In accordance with the definition provided in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act*, any information that leads a person to form a reasonable belief that an employee has committed Reportable Conduct, or misconduct that may involve Reportable Conduct, whether or not the conduct or misconduct is alleged to have occurred within the course of the person's employment.

Reportable conduct

In accordance with the definition in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act*, one or more of the following:

- sexual offences committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- physical violence against, with or in the presence of a child
- any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child
- significant neglect of a child.

Risk

In the context of the Child Safe Standards, risk is exposure to the chance for harm or abuse of a child to occur in connection with an organisation.

Risk management

Risk management involves identifying, preventing and minimising risk as much as is reasonably possible.

Volunteer

Volunteer means any person engaged by or a part of an organisation who provides a service without receiving a financial benefit, regardless of whether their role relates to children. There is no minimum period of engagement to be considered a volunteer.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is a positive state of physical, mental and emotional health. It generally means feeling safe, happy and healthy more than momentarily.

Working With Children Check

A Working With Children Check is the process whereby an assessment is undertaken by the issuing authority (Department of Justice and Community Safety) to determine whether a person is suitable to work in child-related work.