

THE



ACCELER8

LEARNING

CHILD SAFE

POLICY

For the sake of this policy, we define a child as anyone under the age of 18.

Our Commitment to Child Safety

Acceler8 Learning is committed to child safety.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our tutors and staff.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety. Acceler8 Learning is a mandatory reporting agency which requires us to report all potential breaches of our child safe policy to the relevant authorities, regardless of their severity.

Acceler8 Learning is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks. We recognise child abuse can come in a range of forms, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological/emotional abuse and neglect.

Acceler8 Learning has comprehensive human resources and hiring practices for all staff and tutors to ensure they adhere to our child safe policy.

Acceler8 Learning is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and tutors on child abuse risks. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and tutors. We are committed to the inclusion of children from minority groups and children with disabilities.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and tutors to achieve these commitments.

In addition to our stringent hiring process and WWCC for all of our tutors, we require that no child be left alone with their tutor. All lessons should take place in a common area where constant parental presence is maintained. This ensures a safe learning environment for the children we work with.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Our children

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our organisation. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance at Acceler8 Learning, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

Our staff and tutors

This policy guides our staff and tutors on how to behave with children in our organisation.

All of our staff and tutors must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. Our code of conduct is publicly available on our website and is a required training module for our tutors. All staff and tutors, as well as children and their families, are encouraged to contribute to the development of the code of conduct and get in touch if they see any need for changes or improvement.

Training and supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone at Acceler8 Learning understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Acceler8 Learning's culture aims for all staff and tutors (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff and tutors through ongoing supervision and training to understand how their actions can influence the young people they work with and acknowledge when a relationship with a child may become inappropriate.

New employees and tutors will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to the code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and NSW Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Recruitment

We take all reasonable steps to hire skilled people to work with our children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Acceler8 Learning understands that when recruiting staff and tutors we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

All people engaged in child-related work, including tutors, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. We regularly maintain our database of Working with Children Check's and make sure they have applied and/or are cleared prior to working with a student in accordance with the Office of the Children's Guardians requirements.

When necessary, we carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. Police record checks would be used only for the purposes of recruitment and are discarded after the recruitment process is complete. We do retain our own records (but not the actual criminal record) if an applicant's criminal history affected our decision making process.

If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

Fair procedures for personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, tutors, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

Legislative responsibilities

Acceler8 Learning takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

Failure to disclose: Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in New South Wales who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police. A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed.

Failure to protect: People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.

Acceler8 Learning Code of Conduct (for tutors):

All staff, tutors, volunteers and directors of Acceler8 Learning are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

All personnel of Acceler8 Learning are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- adhering to Acceler8 Learning's child safe policy at all times / upholding Acceler8 Learning's statement of commitment to child safety at all time
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that tutors are not left alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to Acceler8 Learning's Child Safety Officer James Elaknouch, and ensure any allegation is reported to the police or child protection
- reporting any child safety concerns to Acceler8 Learning's Child Safety Officer James Elaknouch
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

Tutors and volunteers must not:

- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism

- (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family outside of our organisation without our child safety officer's knowledge and/or consent (for example, catching up for coffee). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is not considered inappropriate.
- have any online contact with a child or their family (unless necessary, for example emailing parents or students)
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

By observing these standards, you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to Acceler8 Learning's Child Safety Officer James Elakcnouch.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Risk management

In NSW, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or tutor is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media).

Regular review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

Allegations, concerns and complaints

Acceler8 Learning takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and tutors are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff and tutors know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- 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

Acceler8 Learning have a comprehensive complaints policy in place to ensure every report is addressed swiftly and responsibly.

Counselling and support services

The Centre Against Sexual Assault

<http://www.casa.org.au> 1800 806 292

1800RESPECT National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service

<https://www.1800respect.org.au> 1800 737 732

Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre

<http://www.safesteps.org.au> 1800 015 188

Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service

<http://www.fvpls.org> 1800 105 303

inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence

<http://intouch.asn.au> 1800 755 988

For further information about our child safe policy please email info@acceler8learning.com.au



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