

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 Youth Arts 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 Youth Arts 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

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

The following procedures will assist Carclew Youth Arts staff members with reporting concerns of suspect 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 and volunteers engaged with Carclew Youth Arts 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 Family and Communities 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.
- The majority of Carclew Youth Arts staff members are trained as Mandated Notifiers, and refresher training is provided on a regular basis. The information from training will be integrated into both the volunteer and employee induction programs and refreshed as required. Trained staff members will guide other staff, board members and volunteers in the associated procedures.
- As an employee or volunteer within a Government agency which 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

4.1.1 Carclew Youth Arts Board

It is the Carclew Youth Arts Board's responsibility to ensure:

- The protection of children/young people from abuse or neglect.

- Prompt response to advice received from the Chief Executive Officer or other sources in relation to any suspect 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.

4.1.2 Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer 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 Youth Arts Police Clearance 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.

4.1.3 Manager/Supervisor

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

- The recruitment and selection of staff/artists/volunteers is carried out in accordance with Carclew Youth Arts Police Clearance 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.

4.1.4 Mandated Notifiers

Mandated Notifiers are obliged under the *Children's Protection Act 1993* to notify the Department for Family and Communities 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 Families and Communities is to assess the notification and determine whether action is warranted.

- As a Mandated Notifier you are obliged to notify the Department for Family and Communities 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 or psychological 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 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 of the child/young person.
- If a report is made against a staff member, the Carclew Youth Arts Board and Chief Executive Officer 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 of the 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*
- *The South Australian Public Sector Act 2009*
- *South Australian Public Sector Employees Code of Conduct March 2009*

6. Additional Information

The following information can be found on the Department for Families and Communities website www.dfc.sa.gov.au and copies are available from Carclew Youth Arts (*Carclew Server/Resources/Carclew Policies*).

- Department for Families and Communities Guidelines for Mandated Notifiers
- Department for Families and Communities Mandatory Notification for Organisations
- Carclew Youth Arts Police Clearance (for the purpose of working with children) Policy and Procedure
- Carclew Youth Arts Code of Conduct and Procedure
- Carclew Youth Arts Grievance Resolution Policy and Procedure
- Duty of Care Form
- Fact Sheet for Tutors
- Child Safe Environment Risk Management Action Plan

- Definitions of Abuse and Neglect Fast Sheet, Department for Families and Communities