

	Operational Policy: Child Safe	
Operational Policy OP018-V1.02		
	Revision Date: 16 th September 2021	Review Date: 16 th September 2023

POLICY

Here at Camp Australia, we are a child safe organisation. Our safety-first approach keeps children safe. We are continually improving our policies and practices based on findings from child safety reviews both internally and externally as we strive to deliver service excellence every day, every session.

This Child Safe policy has been created in collaboration with our families, our educators, Camp Australia (CA) operations staff and CA management. It is based on the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the requirements of the child safe frameworks for each of the states and territories in which our services operate. CA has Our Child Safe Framework guide detailing how we meet each state and territory child safe standards and it is reviewed annually.

This child safe policy will demonstrate the strong commitment CA has in creating and maintaining child safe and child friendly environments and is designed to ensure all employees of CA and our visitors and agency staff are aware of their responsibilities and commitment to child safety.

By creating a child safe and friendly environment, children who come to our services are safe and feel safe, respected, and valued regardless of their background, ethnicity, culture, language, beliefs, age, gender, socioeconomic status, ability, additional needs or family structure.

This policy is supported by many other CA policies specifically written for topics on how we keep children safe by reducing the risk of harm. The Child Safe policy is given to contractors, presented to visitors on sign in, taught to all staff in compulsory CA Child Protection Training and with the assistance of an educator, families can access it in every service. It is also located in the National Operations Policy Manual for all Camp Australia staff, parents and carers to read. This policy will be reviewed as part of our continuous improvement strategy when required but no longer than 2 years.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

CA's risk management strategy is to keep children safe and promote their wellbeing by delivering enriching childhood experiences and guiding children's growth.

Camp Australia:

- is committed to child safety and children's best interests
- has zero tolerance for harm to children and will take all allegations of reportable conduct and safety concerns very seriously, ensuring such conduct is dealt with in accordance with state laws

- will uphold the dignity and rights of all children attending our services to feel safe and protected
- is committed to providing a safe play environment to prevent harm and ensure children are happy and comfortable
- has practices in place to ensure our children go home with the correct parent or carer
- is committed to preventing child harm by identifying risk early, and removing and reducing these risks
- has legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when there are concerns about a child's safety, which will be followed rigorously
- has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all educators and staff
- is committed to providing training and coaching to all educators and management on the risks to children
- is committed to promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with additional needs
- considers the needs of same sex attracted and intersex children and recognises gender diversity in providing a safe environment.

Camp Australia requires all educators and management to uphold these commitments. The organisation has specific policies, procedures and training in place that support its leadership team to achieve these commitments.

STRATEGIES

Our Children

Our educators program activities and are trained in positive relations, refer to CA's Positive Relations policy that will help our children to learn and grow into who they want to be. Educators use the CA Developing Your Service Charter of Commitment to Children Tool to create the Charter of Commitment to Children on display on the service signage board where child safe policy concepts and practices are discussed with the children. Child safe policies and practices are also discussed throughout the year in yarning circles and during child protection week.

Our sessions of care -

- Teach communication strategies which empower children to speak up when they are feeling uncomfortable or vulnerable
- Empower children by involving them in decisions, especially when it involves them
- Involve educators listening to children's views and respecting what they have to say
- Recognise and promote diversity and inclusivity and welcome all people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds (Diversity and Inclusion and Supporting Children with Additional Needs policies). Programming includes the aboriginal 8 ways for learning.

- Encourage feedback from children in many ways such as yarning circles and suggestion boxes children's feedback is also supported by the process in the Children's Comments and Feedback policy and the Children's Grievances and Complaints policy
- Promote child safety and wellbeing and reduce the risk of harm
- Keep children safe online by our educators supervision practices and following the Personal Electronic Devices policy and the Taking and Sharing Photos policy

Our Families

Families are offered several ways they can provide feedback by talking to their service educators, regional managers, or our Customer Care team. Parents are also sent surveys inviting feedback at various times throughout the year. Parents can give feedback via email when using their parent portal. Family feedback is supported by the Family Grievances and Complaints Procedure policy. Our educators are supportive, they understand children and are aware of the challenges associated with parenting. Educators will provide in-service support and access to relevant information to make parenting easier.

Where a child may have a medical condition, parents are involved in creating a risk minimisation and communication plan with the service coordinator. Where a child may have other additional needs, our educators will instigate the CA CARE Program. The educator in collaboration with an Inclusion Support Professional will assess the needs of the service to support the child and may recommend additional resources and/or an Inclusion Support Educator. This prepares our service to be inclusion ready.

Our regional managers and general managers will provide support to affected members of staff, families and the school community where a child safe issue has occurred.

Our Educators

Children are at the centre of everything we do. At CA, we guide children's growth by employing passionate, talented, and dedicated educators who are suitable (Working With Children policy and Recruitment policy). Educators are trained and supported to promote child safety and wellbeing by CA's operations team.

Our educators are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe; all our staff complete compulsory child protection training and sign a Human Resources Code of Conduct. Where state-based child protection training is mandatory, CA will track educators through their staff record and employee file to ensure the training has been completed by the approved registered training organisation in the relevant state.

The safety and well-being of children is our primary concern; however, we also value and provide for the safety and wellbeing of all team members. Our educators are trained on how to identify and minimise risks of harm to children (refer to the child abuse definition below) and to detect potential signs of child harm. All educators will uphold children's privacy unless there is a risk to a child's safety or information has been requested by relevant authorised people.

New educators and team members will be inducted into the service and supervised during site visits and supported by their nominated supervisor and other educators to ensure they uphold the high-quality practices CA has in relation to reducing harm to children and keeping children safe.

Our regional managers and general managers act as a point of contact and support for children, parents and educators with regards to child safety issues. They will support staff to take any necessary action in alignment with state and territory based statutory reporting requirements.

Our regional managers and general managers are responsible for reviewing CA's processes and procedures for responding to allegations or disclosures.

Legislative Requirements

CA takes its legal responsibility very seriously, including failure to disclose and protect children when it has been identified that the child is at risk of harm. CA has risk management strategies in place to identify, assess and take steps to minimise risk of harm to children which must be adhered to by all staff.

All allegations are treated as serious, and CA has practices in place to conduct investigations as required thoroughly and quickly.

Reporting Requirements

Every educator and CA team member has a responsibility to protect the health, safety, welfare and wellbeing of children. Our educators have regular and frequent direct contact with children therefore they are uniquely positioned to observe, and report concerns regarding harm or risk of harm to children.

Camp Australia adheres to all reporting requirements which are relevant in each state and territory as listed the Child Protection Reporting Requirements policy. All CA team members are required to report safety concerns when there is reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm caused by physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or domestic violence.

Educators are provided with additional Child Protection Training to support their understanding of requirements to meet these individual reporting obligations under the following schemes:

- **Reporting to child protection** – for all CA team members report to the relevant child protection authority on any reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering, or is at risk of suffering, harm caused by any forms of abuse or neglect. In VIC, NSW, ACT and SA it is mandated for our educators and some of our management team to report to child protection - refer to CA's Child Protection Reporting Requirements policy.
- **Reporting sexual abuse with children to the police** – for educators in every state to the local police where sexual abuse (and in Qld sexual offending) against children may occur, is occurring or has occurred.

- **Reporting a to the Regulatory Authority** – the approved provider, Camp Australia, must notify the regulatory authority for incidents where child abuse or neglect has occurred, is occurring or suspects maybe occurring while a child is attending a session of care (CA's Serious or Fatal Incident policy).
- **Reportable Conduct Scheme** – for educators in VIC, ACT and NSW for the prevention, identification and handling of allegations of child abuse and neglect made against educators. All appropriate department and government agencies will be advised of reportable allegations as per each state requirement (CA's Reportable Conduct policy).

At all times educators must comply with these requirements and support any additional requests for information from any external agency, including in applicable states where there is the information sharing scheme. Refer to CA's Information Sharing for Child Wellbeing policy on SharePoint.

Definitions of Abuse or Harm

Child abuse and neglect describe actions that endanger children's physical and/or emotional health. Child abuse usually involves a pattern of behaviour that takes place over a period of time, but child abuse can also occur as a single incident. Child abuse and neglect are usually categorised as follows:

Physical abuse

Emotional or psychological (mental) abuse

Sexual abuse or other exploitation of the child, including incest

Neglect

Exposure to domestic violence

Bullying

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse describes when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. This may be from a single or repeated physical act such as hitting, smacking, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, scalding or restraining. Physical abuse includes the use of weapons (such as belts and paddles) or administering poison or harmful substances.

Possible physical indicators:

Unexplained bruises/burns/cuts/welts

Sprains or fractured bones

Unconsciousness

Possible behavioural indicators:

Showing wariness or distrust of adults

Wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injury)

Fear of specific people

Startles or flinches at sudden movement

Overly compliant, withdrawn, uncommunicative or aggressive, destructive or disruptive

Unexplained absences

The position, nature or extent of the injury does not correspond with the explanation of the injury (e.g. bruising on inner arms or legs) or the explanation changes

Excessive accidents resulting in injury

Patterned bruising e.g. hand marks or finger marks from roughly grabbing

Untreated injuries

Learning difficulties

Regression in development

Emotional or psychological (mental) abuse

Emotional abuse occurs when a child is deprived of care and attention, is subject to yelling or bullying, or is ridiculed, threatened, ignored or scared in a way that affects their confidence, self-esteem and emotional wellbeing.

Possible physical indicators:

Delays in emotional, mental, or even physical development

Physical signs of self-harming

Loss of self-confidence or self-esteem

Social withdrawal or a loss of interest or enthusiasm

Parents/carers have a negative attitude towards the child or show little interest in the child's interests or activities

Possible behavioural indicators:

Exhibiting low self-esteem

Exhibiting high anxiety

Displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour

Being withdrawn, passive and/or tearful

Self-harming

Sexual Abuse or Other Exploitation of the Child

Sexual abuse occurs when an adult, a more powerful child or an adolescent exposes a child to sexual activity. Sexual abuse can involve inappropriate touching/kissing, involving a child in a sexual act; exhibitionism, and sexually suggestive comments and behaviour.

Deliberately exposing children to sexually explicit or pornographic material through magazines, videos, computer images or music is also a form of sexual abuse.

Possible physical indicators:

- Presence of sexually transmitted diseases

- Pregnancy

- Bleeding, swelling or redness around the vagina, anus or mouth

- Blood on underwear or complaints of soreness

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge that is unusual for the child's age

- Acting out sexually

- Inappropriate sexual play and behaviour with toys, animals or other children

- Sexual themes in drawings or writings

- Difficulty sleeping

- Being withdrawn

- Complaining of headaches or stomach pains

- Fear of specific people

- Showing wariness or distrust of adults

- Displaying aggressive behaviour

- Regression in development

- Wetting or soiling themselves

- Avoids physical contact or overly affectionate

Neglect

Neglect occurs when the basic needs of the child are not met. This includes failing to provide adequate nutrition, clothing, medical attention, education, shelter and safe living conditions.

Possible physical indicators:

No food in child's lunch box and/or frequently hungry

Signs of malnutrition (e.g. excessively skinny)

Inappropriate or dirty clothing

Unexplained sores or rashes

Frequent cases of head lice or illness

Excessively tired

Poor hygiene

High absences

Possible behavioural indicators:

Stealing food or other items

Staying at school outside of school hours

Aggressive or withdrawn behaviour

Misusing alcohol or drugs

Socially rejected or isolated

Developmental or learning delays

Exposure to domestic violence

Exposure to domestic violence can cause both physical and emotional harm to children. Children do not have to be involved in or witness the violence to be affected by it.

Possible physical indicators:

Aggressive or violent behaviour

Poor concentration

Disturbed sleep, nightmares

Possible behavioural indicators:

Fear of specific people

High levels of anxiety

Low self-esteem

Being extremely apologetic and meek.

Depression

Bullying

A person is bullied when they are deliberately and repeatedly physically or emotionally hurt by a more powerful person or group of people. Bullying can involve name calling or teasing, verbal threats and rumours, or deliberately excluding a child from an activity. Bullying may also involve the child being hit or pushed around by another child or group of children or the child's property being taken away or damaged.

Possible physical indicators:

Unexplained bruises/cuts/welts

Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness

Change in eating habits, e.g. suddenly not wanting to eat on a regular basis or binge eating

Lost or destroyed clothing, books etc.

Possible behavioural indicators:

Fear of specific people

Exhibiting low self-esteem

Exhibiting high anxiety

Displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour

Being withdrawn, passive and/or tearful

Grooming Behaviour

Grooming is the process by which sexual predators groom children, and protective people in the community, such as parents, carers and educators to gain trust to be able to access a child without causing suspicion. Our educators are to follow the Grooming policy to help identify this behaviour and protect children from predators.

CA Team Members Awareness:

- All CA team members are to complete compulsory CA child protection training. In some states and territories, there is also external compulsory child protection training.
- CA team members must be aware of their state or territory legal responsibilities for preventing risk of harm to children.
- CA team members should be aware of indicators of risk to children such as -physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, domestic violence and bullying.

- When a team member suspects a child may be at risk of harm, they are to follow their state or territory's legal reporting requirements. Refer to CA's Child Protection Reporting Requirements policy.
- Team members should monitor their own behaviour and environment to create an environment that provides little opportunity for infiltration.
- Team members must report any behaviour witnessed that may be considered as grooming following **PN084 Reporting a Child Safety Concern**. Refer to CA's Grooming Behaviour policy.

In the event of a suspicion or if the parent/carer/adult discloses information:

If an adult discloses an incident of abuse to an educator:

- Follow **PN084 Reporting a Child Safety Concern** and call **000** if a child is in immediate danger
- The educator must advise the adult that you will take notes during their discussion to capture all details.
- The educator must explain to the adult that this information will need to be repeated to the state child protection agency, the regulatory authority, the police (where necessary) and the regional manager and general manager.
- It is important that the educator does not make any promises at this early stage and advise them that they will do their best to keep the child safe.
- Provide the adult with a blank **FM004 Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma** form they can complete the form or write it together.
- Ask them what action they would like the educator to take and advise them of what the next steps will be – seek advice from your regional manager if required.
- When an educator suspects a child may be at risk of harm, they are to follow their state or territory's legal reporting requirements. Educators can use this form **FM029 Child Protection Report Form** to collect information. Refer to CA's Child Protection Reporting Requirements policy. All documentation identifying suspected harm or risk of harm to a child must be given/forwarded to the regional manager and stored in a secure and confidential manner.
- Educators must ensure that the content of the documentation remains confidential and that only the educators dealing directly with the child and the regional manager are across the events and the report. Under no circumstances will the suspicion be discussed outside of the service or anyone who is not directly involved.
- All reports will remain confidential within the Child Protection Authority. However, if the report becomes the subject of a protection application, the educator/s may be required to give evidence to the court
- Educators must be aware that some people and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face some barriers when reporting any allegations of child abuse.

- Where an allegation may involve an aboriginal child, the child/parent may need a culturally appropriate representative. The educator should advise their regional manager who will engage the parent/carer with a local aboriginal community group.
- If a situation arises where the regional manager is not immediately available to talk this through, then the educators must speak with another member of the operations team or Human Resources.
- As a professional courtesy to the principal of the school and to make the school aware of the child's situation, the regional manager may inform the principal that a report has been made. As reports of abuse are confidential this will be at the discretion of the general manager.
- All suspicions, whether reported or not, must be documented as these suspicions may later be used as evidence by the investigating agencies.
- Each educator has different legal responsibilities with child protection training and reporting.

In the event of a suspicion or if the child discloses information:

If a child discloses an incident of abuse to an Educator:

- Follow **PN084 Reporting a Child Safety Concern** and call **000** if a child is in immediate danger
- The educator must try and separate the child and themselves from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully.
- It is important to let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred.
- The educator must ensure questions are open ended – do not ask questions that may be leading.
- The educator must explain to the child that this information may need to be shared with others such as someone at Camp Australia, the police or where appropriate, their parents.
- It is important that the educator does not make promises to the child but explain they will do their best to keep them safe.
- Reassure the child that it was right to tell an adult.
- The educator should stay with the child if they seem at ease with your company as they are likely to be in a distressed state.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, where an educator has reasonable grounds to believe that a child is at risk of harm report to the relevant authority, follow the Child Protection Reporting Requirements policy and report the disclosure to the regional manager who will assist with the next steps. An educator can make a report directly to their state or territory child protection authority or seek advice from their regional manager (or another regional manager if theirs is not available or contact Human Resources).
- Educators must be aware that some children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face some barriers when disclosing and are to support them – seek advice from your regional manager.

- Where an allegation may involve an Aboriginal child, the service may need a culturally appropriate representative. The educator must advise the regional manager about who will engage with the parent/carer and the local aboriginal community group.
- Children with a disability may experience some barriers when disclosing an incident, the educator can seek advice from their regional manager.
- As a professional courtesy to the principal of the school and to make the school aware of the child's situation, the regional manager may inform the principal that a report has been made. As reports of abuse are confidential this will be at the discretion of the general manager.
- All documentation identifying suspected abuse must be forwarded to the regional manager and stored in a safe, secure, and confidential manner.
- Educators must ensure that the content of the documentation remains confidential and that only the educators dealing directly with the child and the regional manager are aware of the events and the report. Under no circumstances will the suspicion be discussed outside of the service or anyone who is not directly involved.
- All reports will remain confidential within the Child Protection Authority. However, if the report becomes the subject of a protection application, the educator/s may be required to give evidence to the court.
- Each educator has different legal responsibilities with Child Protection Training and Reporting. Educators must be familiar with and comply with the legal responsibility for child protection as per state requirements, for further information refer to the organisation for child protection web sites as listed in the table below:

State Organisations for Child Protection

State	Organisation for Child protection	Contact
Australian Capital Territory (ACT)	Child and Youth Protection Services	www.communityservices.act.gov.au www.ombudsman.act.gov.au Phone: General public Ph: 1300 556 729 (24 hours) Mandated reporters Ph: 1300 556 728 (24 hours) Online: For less serious concerns, complete an online child concern report . Email: For less serious concerns, contact Child Protection Reports (link sends e-mail)
New South Wales (NSW)	Families and Community Services	www.facs.nsw.gov.au www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

		<p>Phone: Child Protection Helpline Ph: 13 21 11 (24 hours) (TTY/voice calls: 133 677; Speak & Listen: 1300 555 727; SMS: 0423 677 767)</p> <p>Online: Mandatory reporters with less serious concerns can use eReporting.</p>
Northern Territory (NT)	Territory Families	<p>www.nt.gov.au</p> <p>Phone: Child Abuse Hotline Ph: 1800 700 250 (24 hours)</p>
Queensland (QLD)	Child Safety Services	<p>www.csyw.qld.gov.au</p> <p>Phone: For a list of contact numbers during business hours, go to: Regional Intake Services.</p> <p>Child Safety After Hours Service Centre Ph: 1800 177 135 or (07) 3235 9999.</p>
South Australia (SA)	The Department for Child Protection	<p>www.childprotection.sa.gov.au</p> <p>Phone: Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) Ph: 13 14 78 (24 hours)</p> <p>Online: Less serious concerns can also be reported online.</p>
Victoria (VIC)	Department of Health and Human Services	<p>www.servicesdhhs.vic.gov.au</p> <p>Phone: For a list of regional and metropolitan phone numbers: Child Protection Contacts</p> <p>After hours child protection emergency service Ph: 13 12 78</p>
Western Australia (WA)	Department of Communities	<p>www.dcp.wa.gov.au</p> <p>Phone: Central Intake Team Ph: 1800 273 889</p> <p>After hours Ph: (08) 9223 1111 or Country Freecall: 1800 199 008</p> <p>Online: Mandatory reporters with less</p>

		serious concerns can use the department's secure Mandatory Reporting Web System
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External Information References:	
Education and Care Services National Law 2010	Sections 162A, 166, 167
Education and Care Services National Regulations	Regulations 84, 168 2(h), Regulations 175 (2) (d), (e)
My Time Our Place Framework for School Age Care in Australia	Outcome 1-5
National Quality Framework	QA2, QA4, QA7
Victoria	Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Act 2014 Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
New South Wales	Children and Young Persons Act 1998 Children's Guardian Act 2019
ACT	Children and Young People Act 2008 Ombudsman Act 1989
Queensland	Child Protection Act 1999
Northern Territory	Care and Protection of Children Act 2007
Western Australia	Children and Community Services Act 2004
South Australia	Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016