Child protection policy

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Approval Authority: Chief Executive Officer
Last Approval Date: September 2013
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Audience: UQ Sport Staff; UQ Community; Parents & Guardians; Children

1. Statement

UQ Sport embraces the underlying principle that sport and recreation can play a significant part in the development of the social and cultural life at the University.

UQ Sport acknowledges it has a responsibility for the safety of children participating in any of its activities or otherwise under its temporary care. It also recognises that appropriate and clear child protection policies and procedures are of benefit to everyone involved with UQ Sport, including staff, as they can help protect them from erroneous or malicious allegations.

UQ Sport is committed to practices which protect children from harm. For the purpose of this policy, UQ Sport staff includes full-time employees, part time employees, casual employees, contractors and volunteers.

All Staff who have supervision responsibility for children are required to:
- recognise and accept their responsibilities;
- develop awareness of the issues which can cause children harm; and
- report concerns following the procedure below.

UQ Sport will endeavour to safeguard children by:
- adopting child protection procedures and a code of practice for all who work on behalf of the organisation;
- reporting concerns to the authorities;
- following carefully the recruitment and selection procedures for staff, contractors and volunteers; and
- providing effective management for staff, contractors and volunteers through support and training.

UQ Sport is also committed to reviewing its Child Protection Policy and Code of Practice at regular intervals.
2. Policy

It is UQ Sport policy that:

- all staff working on behalf of UQ Sport are made aware of, read and comply with the Child Protection Policy;
- all staff working on behalf of UQ Sport accept responsibility for the welfare of children who come into contact with UQ Sport in connection with its tasks and functions, and that they will report any concerns about a child or somebody else’s behaviour, using the procedures laid down;
- there are designated child protection person(s) within UQ Sport who will take action following any expression of concern and the lines of responsibility in respect of child protection are clear;
- designated child protection person(s) know how to make appropriate referrals to child protection agencies;
- all those who are involved with children on behalf of UQ Sport should adhere to the Code of Practice (see section 3 of this document) in relation to children;
- information relating to any allegation or disclosure will be clearly recorded as soon as possible, and there is a procedure setting out who should record information and the timelines for passing this information on;
- Considerations of confidentiality which might apply to other situations should not be allowed to over-ride the right of children to be protected from harm. However, every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned when an allegation has been made and is being investigated;
- UQ Sport’s policies regarding children will be openly and widely available to staff and actively promoted within the organisation;
- a culture of mutual respect between children and those who represent UQ Sport in all its activities will be encouraged, with adults modeling good practice in this context;
- all staff, volunteers and anyone in paid or unpaid work on behalf of UQ Sport who have supervision responsibility for children will be checked appropriately and will be required to hold a “Working with Children Blue Card”. It is also part of UQ Sport’s acceptance of its responsibility of duty of care towards children that anybody who encounters child protection concerns in the context of their work on behalf of UQ Sport will be supported when they report their concerns in good faith; and
- UQ Sport will perform annual risk assessments on activities requiring interaction with children. While these risk assessments will be carried out in conjunction with the risk assessments performed on the physical environment, specific risk assessments will also be conducted on child related activities (e.g. how our instructors actually manage risk when coaching).
3. Code of Practice

UQ Sport expects that all staff, which for these purposes includes anybody in paid or unpaid work on its behalf, will be aware of this Code of Practice and adhere to its principles in their approach to all children.

- It is important to be very aware of any physical contact with children and this should be avoided where possible. However, this may be difficult in cases where hands-on instruction is required (e.g. Learn to Swim). All staff are advised to be extremely conscious of physical contact, to avoid it wherever possible and use appropriate contact when required during coaching/instruction.

- It is not good practice to take children alone in a car on journeys, however short.

- Do not make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child, even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted.

- It is important not to deter children from making a ‘disclosure’ of harm through fear of not being believed, and to listen to what they have to say. (Guidance on handling a disclosure is set out in “Responding Appropriately to a Child Making an Allegation of Harm or Abuse” – see page 7). If this gives rise to a child protection concern it is important to follow UQ Sport procedure for reporting such concerns, and not to attempt to investigate the concern yourself.

- Remember that those who abuse children can be of any age (even other children), gender, ethnic background or class, and it is important not to allow personal preconceptions about people to prevent appropriate action taking place.

- Good practice includes valuing and respecting children as individuals, and the adult modeling of appropriate conduct - which will always exclude bullying, shouting, racism, sectarianism or sexism.

4. Definitions of Harm & Abuse

As per the Child Protection Act 1999 (Queensland), harm, to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing.

It is immaterial how the harm is caused.

Harm can be caused by physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; sexual abuse or exploitation. Harm can be caused by a single act, omission or circumstance; or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

**Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may be the result of a deliberate act, but could also be caused through the omission or failure to act to protect.

**Emotional / psychological abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve making a child feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
Sexual abuse
Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. It may involve physical contact, including rape or oral sex, or non-penetrative acts such as fondling. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, and by other young people. It also includes non-contact activities such as involving children in watching or taking part in the making of pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in inappropriate ways.

Neglect
Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. It may involve failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or failing to ensure that a child gets appropriate medical care or treatment.

5. Recruitment and selection procedures
UQ Sport is committed to having appropriate recruitment and selection processes and practices to ensure the consistent application of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

The recruitment practices will include the following:

- Clear definitions for all roles, including casual roles.
- Selection of staff based on core competencies and personal attributes.
- Reference checks to be undertaken for all staff.
- All staff who have a responsibility for the supervision of children are required to declare any previous convictions and must agree to a formal check and are required to hold a “Working with Children Blue Card”.

6. Roles and responsibilities of the Designated Child Protection Person (DCPP)
UQ Sport has appointed a designated child protection person who is responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children. This person is:

Junior Sport Coordinator  Tel: 07 3365 6018  E-mail: JamieH@uqsport.com.au

In the event the Junior Sport Coordinator is absent, we have another DCPP available:

Human Resources Manager  Tel: 07 3365 6256  E-mail: HayleyM@uqsport.com.au
The role of the DCPPs is to:

- know which outside child protection agency to contact in the event of a child protection concern coming to the notice of UQ Sport;
- provide information and advice on child protection within UQ Sport;
- ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing under confidential cover;
- liaise with local social services and other agencies, as appropriate;
- keep relevant people within UQ Sport informed about any action taken and any further action required; for example, disciplinary action against a member of staff;
- ensure that a proper record is kept of any referral and action taken, and that this is kept safely and in confidence;
- advise UQ Sport of child protection training needs; and
- liaise with the Department of Communities (Queensland Government) to review the operation of the Child Protection Policy regularly to ensure the procedures are working and that it complies with current best practice.

7. Procedure for reporting concerns

Staff could have their suspicion or concern raised in a number of ways, the most likely of which are:

- the conduct of a member of UQ Sport staff;
- a child “disclosing” abuse;
- bruising or evidence of physical hurt; which may or may not be accompanied by; and
- unusual behaviour by a child.

If a member of staff has such concerns they should be reported to a DCPP using the Incident Report Form as set out as a part of the process flowchart.

Concerns about a specific child should be

- reported immediately by telephone to the DCPP; and
- confirmed in writing within 24 hours using the Child Protection Incident Report Form available from the DCPP (copy on page 8-9 of this document).

Delay could prejudice the welfare of a child. If the concerns relate to the conduct of a member of staff these should be reported by phone to the DCPP at the earliest opportunity.

The DCPP will consider the report and either refer this immediately to the authorities or, after taking appropriate advice (which may include discussing the circumstances on a confidential basis with the NSPCC), decide not to refer the concerns to the authorities but keep a full record of the concerns.
8. Process flowchart for reporting concerns

This flowchart demonstrates the process by which child protection concerns will be addressed by UQ Sport.
9. Responding appropriately to a child making an allegation of harm or abuse

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully to what is said.
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets.
- Tell the child that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it.
- Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace.
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Tell them what you will do next, and with whom the information will be shared.
- Record in writing what was said, using the child’s own words as soon as possible – note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.
- It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies, following a referral from the designated child protection person in the organisation.
Child Protection Incident Report Form

UQ Sport is committed to practices that protect children from harm. This form should be completed if you are alerted to an incident of abuse, or suspect abuse of a child. Please complete this form within 24 hours of being alerted to an incident and forward it to the Designated Child Protection Person (DCPP): Junior Sport Coordinator or HR Manager.

This page is to be completed by the person alerted to, or suspects an incident.

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<td>List any witnesses to the incident:</td>
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<td>Description of incident (please state facts):</td>
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Child Protection Incident Report Form

This page is to be completed by the DCPP.

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Please sign and return this page to the HR Division.

Employee Declaration

I hereby confirm that I have ready the UQ Sport Child Protection Policy and that I understand the conditions contained therein.

I confirm that I will act according to the criteria outlined in the policy, and perform my duties in such a way that no child will be put at risk. I confirm that should I have any suspicions of child abuse relating to children in my care during the course of my employ, I will follow the required process to report these.

NAME: ____________________________

DATE: __________

SIGNED: ____________________________