

# UQSL Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy

## 1.0 Introduction

UQ Sport's Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy has been developed in compliance with our obligations under the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* and the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011* to promote and protect children and young people.

In order to comply with the legislative framework, this strategy addresses eight (8) minimum requirements.

These requirements:

- address our organisation's commitment to creating a safe and supportive service environment;
- strengthen our organisation's capability to provide such an environment;
- assist our organisation to manage any particular concerns with respect to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who are involved with the organisation; and
- promote the consistency of our organisation's approach to risk management, both within the organisation and with respect to compliance with the requirements under the Act.

The eight requirements are:

### **COMMITMENT**

1. A statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm.
2. A code of conduct for interacting with children.

### **CAPABILITY**

3. Written procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing staff and volunteers.

### **CONCERNS**

4. Policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines.
5. A plan for managing breaches of the risk management strategy.
6. Risk management plans for high-risk activities and special events.

### **CONSISTENCY**

7. Policies and procedures for managing compliance with the blue card system.
8. Strategies for communication and support.

## 2.0 Statement of Commitment

UQ Sport Ltd (UQSL) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people accessing our programs and services in the sporting environment.

To meet this commitment, UQSL will provide a safe, empowering and supportive service environment for children and young people through the implementation of this strategy and child protection policies and procedures.

Our employees, contractors, and volunteers will treat all children and young people with respect and understanding at all times and listen to their concerns.

We will continually improve our processes, policies and procedures to ensure we are:

- Prohibiting any form of harm and abuse against children and young people.
- Fostering a culture of safety commitment and accountability for the protection of children and young people.
- Fostering an inclusive environment where children and young people from indigenous or diverse backgrounds and those with disability can safely participate in our programs and services.
- Carefully selecting and screening employees, contractors and volunteers whose role requires them to work with children and young people.
- Continually educating our employees, contractors and volunteers on child safe behaviour and ensuring UQ Sport's Code of Conduct for staff and standards of appropriate behaviour as outlined in this strategy are enforced.
- Complying with all relevant legislative requirements.
- Enforcing a robust reporting regime for documenting and investigating all incidents and complaints.
- Providing support to manage disclosures or suspicions of harm.

### 3.0 Child Safe Code of Conduct

UQSL has developed appropriate standards of behaviour that are expected of employees, contractors and volunteers when interacting with children and young people.

All UQSL staff, contractors and volunteers must comply with the Child Safe Code of Conduct and are responsible for upholding the integrity of the organisation and always placing the safety and welfare of children and young people above other considerations.

#### UQSL staff, volunteers, and contractors **must**:

- At all times, comply with the safeguarding of children in our care and abide by all relevant UQSL policies and procedures.
- Report all disclosures or suspicions of harm to the Designated Child Protection Person(s).
- Complete mandatory child protection inductions and training provided by UQSL.
- Maintain appropriate professional qualifications and registrations.
- Demonstrate and model ethical and moral behaviours.
- Avoid placing themselves in potentially compromising situations with children and young people.
- Use appropriate and inclusive language and accept that the use of inappropriate language including demeaning, threatening or aggressive language, insults, racial slurs, sexual jokes and other forms of non-supportive language will not be tolerated.
- Foster a sense of belonging, community and wellbeing through positive interactions with children.
- Treat all children fairly and respect diversity and the unique backgrounds and needs of each child.
- Take time to listen, acknowledge and value each child's contribution.
- Ensure any child-related incidents and near misses are reported immediately as per the Incident and Emergency - Children Procedure.
- Empower children by involving them in decision making.
- Promote positive self-esteem and celebrate a child's capacity to achieve.
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times in line with the Supervision - Children Procedure.

- Ensure any physical contact with children is limited to emergency situations or demonstrating a skill or for instructional purposes as part of an activity.
- Ensure that prior to touching a child, a verbal explanation is given to the child of how, where, when and why.
- Ensure that their relationships with children are strictly professional and that favouritism and special treatment are avoided.
- Use positive guidance strategies for addressing incidents of challenging behaviour in accordance with the Behaviour Management – Children Procedure.
- Promote sun safety by scheduling outdoor activities outside peak UV radiation periods whenever possible and ensuring children are outdoors for no more than 2 hours at any one time as much as practicable in accordance with the Sun Protection – Children Procedure.
- Respect the confidentiality of all information related to children and young people, including information about disclosures or suspicions of harm.

### UQSL staff, volunteers, and contractors **must not**:

- Discipline children or young people through the use of verbal, emotional or physical abuse.
- Communicate with a child in ways that are likely to humiliate, frighten or distress the child.
- Use inappropriate physical contact including:
  - Hitting, kicking, slapping, pushing, pinching, shaking, or throwing
  - Kissing, cuddling or touching of a sexual nature
  - Getting a child to sit on their lap
  - Touching in a culturally insensitive way
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or undertake a task of a personal nature for a child or young person that they are capable of doing themselves e.g. changing clothes, feeding.
- Separate themselves and a child from the line of sight of other people.
- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm.
- Invite or encourage children or young people to their home.
- Provide food or snacks to children.
- Smoke when on any UQ or UQSL premises.
- Transport children in a private vehicle.
- Be in possession of, or under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Engage in baby-sitting or child-minding or other after-hours activities with children or young people.
- Contact or converse with children or young people through social media unless they are UQ Sport approved and monitored social media platforms and content is related solely to UQ Sport services and activities.
- Take unauthorised photographs of children and young people without the written permission from parents/carers and using non-UQSL photographic or recording equipment.
- Place on personal social media platforms including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat; personal information, photographs or videos of children or young people involved in any capacity with UQSL.
- Exchange personal contact details with a child or young person such as phone number, social networking sites or email address.
- Text or email information directly to a child or young person's mobile phone or email address, unless for the express purpose of conducting UQSL business. All communications are to include the parent/carer/guardian and must only be made from UQSL devices.

## 4.0 Recruitment, selection, training and management of employees and volunteers

### Recruitment and selection

UQSL's recruitment and selection processes aim to recruit and select employees and volunteers that work with children that are appropriately qualified and suitable for working with children and young people.

To ensure that the right person is hired for undertaking work with children, UQSL has put into place effective controls in the recruitment and selection process. Where work with children is a requirement of the role, the Position Description will specify the attitudes, attributes, values, skills and experience required particularly as they relate to children. When the position is advertised, specific reference to the health, safety and welfare of children is included in the job advert.

Job applications for positions requiring a Blue Card are assessed on the basis of merit. Where a Blue Card is a requirement for a position, this requirement will be checked and validated during the recruitment and selection process. Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed and asked behavioural questions that explore how they have behaved in employment-related situations. The questions allow the selection panel to understand how the candidate would respond in challenging circumstances as they relate to children.

A final control in the recruitment and selection process is conducting reference checks. Reference checks are conducted on candidates to confirm their previous employment, experience, skills, behaviour, and suitability to work with children and young people. A successful reference check is required before any appointments are confirmed. The reference check will include questions about the suitability of the individual to work with children and young people. Sample questions for referee checks may include:

- Would you employ the person again?
- Have you directly supervised the applicant and directly observed their work with children?
- Do you have any concerns about the applicant working directly with children?
- Can you give an example of a time when you observed the applicant managing a child with challenging behaviours?

### Probationary period of employment

All UQSL employees undergo a probationary period of three months at the start of their employment where they are assessed to determine their suitability for the job. Where three months is not sufficient to make an objective decision about the continuation of employment, UQSL may extend the probationary period for another three months. During this period, the employee will receive constructive feedback regarding their performance and their ability to adapt to the culture of the organisation.

### Training

UQSL requires all employees, contractors and volunteers to complete induction training prior to interacting with children. The induction training covers UQSL processes and procedures, and the standards of behaviour required of workers in their interactions with children and young people. Additionally, all UQSL workers requiring a Blue Card must read and acknowledge the Blue Card Policy before commencing their employment.

To ensure that UQSL employees continue to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, they must undertake annual refresher training. UQSL will keep training attendance records to demonstrate the information, instruction and training provided to the relevant employees.

## 5.0 Handling disclosures or suspicions of harm

UQSL acknowledges that there are times where a child or young person participating in UQSL programs and services may disclose harm or where harm to a child or young person is suspected. It is important that individuals working for UQSL are aware of how they are expected to deal with these circumstances.

UQSL employees and volunteers should remain alert to any warning signs or indicators and pay close attention to changes in the child's behaviour, ideas, feelings and the words they use.

### Reasonable grounds to suspect harm

You can suspect harm when:

- a child or young person tells you they have been harmed
- someone else, for example another child, a parent, or an employee, tells you that harm has occurred or is likely to occur
- a child or young person tells you they know someone who has been harmed (it is possible that they may be referring to themselves)
- you are concerned at significant changes in the behaviour of a child or young person, or the presence of new unexplained and suspicious injuries, or
- you see the harm happening

### Responding to a suspicion of harm or disclosure

You must:

- remain calm and listen attentively, actively and non-judgementally
- avoid expressing shock or disbelief
- ensure there is a private and appropriate place to talk
- encourage the person to talk in their own words and ensure just enough open-ended questions are asked to act protectively (e.g. 'Can you tell me what happened'...or 'Can you tell me more about that'). Do not ask leading questions which tend to suggest an answer.
- ensure the person is advised that the disclosure cannot remain a secret and it is necessary to tell someone in order to get help
- reassure the person they have done the right thing by telling you
- do not attempt to investigate or mediate an outcome

UQSL has appointed a Designated Child Protection Person (DCPP) who is responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children.

The role of the DCPP is to:

- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff and provide information on child protection policies and procedures at UQSL
- review the operation of child protection policies and procedures regularly to ensure they comply with best practice
- provide regular briefings and updates to staff to help ensure that everyone is kept up to date on latest policy and procedure developments and reminded of their responsibilities
- keep detailed, accurate and secure records of concerns, disclosures or suspicions of harm
- attend training related to child safety
- refer cases of suspected harm or disclosures to Child Safety Services and/or Queensland Police Service as appropriate

UQSL requires that any employee, contractor or volunteer who sees or reasonably suspects that a child or young person has been or is being harmed or abused to report it immediately to the DCPP by way of completion of a Child Protection Incident Report Form. This form is available on the UQSL website. If the

concerns relate to the conduct of a member of staff, these should be reported to the DCPD at the earliest opportunity. Any disclosure of harm is highly sensitive and should be dealt with in a prompt, sensitive and confidential manner.

The DCPD 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 Child Safety and Disability Services Unit within the Department of Communities in the Queensland Government), decide not to refer the concerns to the authorities but keep a full record of the concerns.

### DCPDs for the organisation are identified as below:

Human Resource Manager

- Tel: 3346 7523
- E-mail: [childprotection@uqsport.com.au](mailto:childprotection@uqsport.com.au)

In the absence of the Human Resources Manager, the DCPD is as follows:

Campus Engagement Manager

- Tel: 3365 8323
- Email: [childprotection@uqsport.com.au](mailto:childprotection@uqsport.com.au)

## 6.0 Managing breaches of the child and youth risk management strategy

A breach is any action or inaction by any UQ Sport employees, contractors, volunteers, children, parents or carers who fail to comply with any part of this strategy.

Breaches will be managed in a fair, unbiased and supportive manner. Where a UQ Sport employee is alleged to have committed harm to a child, the Misconduct/Serious Misconduct Policy and procedures will apply and the individual may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

## 7.0 Compliance with the Blue Card system

UQSL is committed to complying with the requirements of the Blue Card system and the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*. To meet its legislative obligations, UQSL has developed and implemented a Blue Card Policy which sets the guidelines for the requirement to hold a Blue Card at UQSL.

In conjunction with the Blue Card Policy, UQSL also has processes to verify, manage and maintain Blue Cards for its workers.

### Identification of positions requiring a Blue Card

Not every position at UQSL requires a Blue Card. UQSL has conducted an extensive review of positions within the organisation to identify whether they require a Blue Card dependent on the frequency of contact with children and young people. For a position to require a Blue Card, it must involve activities directed mainly at children for at least:

- eight consecutive days;
- once a week, each week, over four weeks;
- once a fortnight, each fortnight, over eight weeks; or
- once a month, each month, over six months.

Positions which do not meet the minimum frequency of contact with children will not require a Blue Card.

### Nomination of a contact person and their responsibilities

UQSL has appointed the Human Resources and Office Administrator as the designated contact person for managing Blue Cards and Exemption Cards within the organisation. This individual has access to the Blue Card Organisation Portal and receives all notifications from Blue Card Services, including the status of a person's Blue Card. Additionally, the Human Resources Manager has oversight of the portal and all associated Blue Card processes.

### Managing Blue Card applications

UQSL adheres to the 'no card, no start' law. UQSL employees and volunteers who require a Blue Card will not be able to start work until their application for a Blue Card has been approved by Blue Card Services.

UQSL encourages its staff to apply for a Blue Card online, however it also supports paper-based applications.

The following steps are taken to manage Blue Card applications:

- At the stage of recruitment and appointment, the employee or volunteer is provided with a Position Description which stipulates whether they require a Blue Card.
- Information on how to apply for a Blue Card online is provided to the employee or volunteer. This is a standard email to guide staff in the Blue Card application process. The email includes a disclosure which states that it is an offence for a disqualified person to sign a Blue Card application form. Further, it notifies all applicants that by signing the application form, they are consenting to the Blue Card screening process.
- For paper-based applications, the Human Resources and Office Administrator certifies that they have sighted documents to confirm the employees' or volunteers' identity as prescribed in the Act.
- The HR and Office Administrator is informed by the Blue Card Services of the applicant's Blue Card status and links the individual to the organisation through the Blue Card Organisational Portal. Human Resources maintains a copy of the applicant's positive notice on their file.
- Thereafter, details of the employee's Blue Card, including an image of the card or position notice, the card number, date of issue, and expiry date is entered on the Human Resources (HR) system. The HR system manages notifications for when a Blue Card is nearing expiry and when its status changes to invalid.
- Contractors requiring a Blue Card will be responsible for applying for a Blue Card and producing evidence thereof when requested by UQSL. Where a contractor is required to hold a Blue Card, the contractor will be responsible for their compliance with this requirement which includes maintaining a register of their employees' Blue Card information. UQSL may request documentation evidencing compliance from contractors.

### Managing existing Blue Card holders

UQSL has an ongoing process for managing compliance related to the Blue Cards of existing employees and volunteers. When a person joins the organisation and already has a Blue Card, the validity of the card is verified by the Human Resources and Office Administrator.

Further, the Human Resources Department circulates a weekly compliance report to all supervisors and managers advising them of invalid Blue Cards and cards expiring within 90 days. Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that staff with invalid Blue Cards are not rostered for work until they receive a positive notice and provide evidence thereof.

## Managing changes in police information

UQSL's Blue Card Policy requires all employees and volunteers to notify Blue Card Services when there is a change in their police information.

## Managing high risk individuals

UQSL will ensure that high risk individuals do not undertake any child-related work within UQSL. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to manage risks of harm to children and young people that may arise as a result of the person's ongoing employment. When UQSL receives a notification that an employee is a high risk, their manager and the CEO will be notified. If the employee is undertaking child-related work, they will be immediately removed from that role and be classified as non-compliant for that role.

High risk individuals are employees who:

- Receive a negative notice or is a known disqualified person;
- Have their Blue Card or Exemption Card cancelled or suspended; or
- Have their Blue Card application withdrawn.

## Managing Blue Card registers

UQSL has an employee register on the Blue Card Services Portal of all identified staff who hold a Blue Card. UQSL also has an HR information system that maintains details of employees' Blue Cards, including the issue date, expiry date, and Blue Card number.

## 8.0 Risk management plan for high-risk activities and special events

UQSL is committed to ensuring work, health and safety (WHS) hazards and risks are systematically identified, assessed, recorded, and managed. UQSL has a WHS Risk Management Procedure which works in conjunction with this strategy.

Not all activities and programs involving children at UQSL are deemed to be high risk. This includes all programs and services that are offered by UQSL on a regular and systematic basis. Where UQSL has been engaged to deliver a special event or high-risk activity, a risk assessment is required to ensure that appropriate control measures are implemented to manage the identified risks. High-risk activities involving children is at management discretion. These activities may include activities that involve the participation of people external to UQSL or activities that take place at an external venue with a large amount of people and/or hazards.

## 9.0 Strategies for communication and support

The UQSL Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy is readily accessible to staff, volunteers, children and parents. This document is available on the UQSL website and the organisation's intranet. Further information regarding child protection may also be emailed to parents by program coordinators.

UQSL conducts regular workshops on child protection, the process for reporting child abuse incidents and children related policies and procedures. These workshops ensure that all people in the organisation are aware of their responsibilities and understand what is acceptable behaviour for interacting with children. Additionally, they highlight the importance of UQSL's commitment to protecting the safety and wellbeing of children in the service environment and reduce the likelihood of breaches of the risk management strategy.

To ensure UQSL's Children and Youth Risk Management Strategy remains current and effective, this strategy will be monitored and reviewed annually, and the review will be coordinated by the Human Resources Manager. The review will consider:

- a) Whether the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy was followed.
- b) Whether any incidents relating to children and young people's risk management issues occurred.
- c) The process used to manage any incidents/issues.

On completion of the review, UQSL employees, volunteers, contractors, and parents will be advised of any changes to UQSL policies and procedures as a result of the review and where appropriate training will be provided.

## 10.0 Meta Data for Document Management

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