

Policy Title:	Child Safety Code of Conduct		
Approved by:	Board	Adopted on:	29 August 2024
Responsibility:	CEO	Review Date:	29 August 2026
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1 SECL’s statement of commitment to Child Safety

South East Community Links (SECL) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

We seek to prevent harm of any kind impacting children and young people and have a zero tolerance for racism, child abuse and inequality. Children and young people’s rights, relationships, identity, and culture must be recognised and respected, their voices heard, and their concerns acted upon.

Our Child Safe Code of Conduct policy outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by staff, volunteers, student and board members towards children and young people. It aims to protect children and young people and reduce opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps staff by providing them with guidance on how to best support children and young people and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all physical and online environments used by children and young people, it also applies during or outside of working hours and in other locations provided by SECL for children or young people (for examples, camps).

2 Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, students, and board members who are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children.

3 Purpose of Child Safe Code of Conduct

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of adults with children and young people at SECL.

All staff are responsible for care, consideration of children and reporting information about child abuse within SECL program areas.

We will aim:

- To facilitate the prevention of child abuse
- to work towards an organisational culture of child safety
- to ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities for identifying child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs
- to provide guidance to staff/volunteers/students as to actions that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of SECL
- to provide a clear statement to staff/volunteers/students forbidding any such abuse
- to provide assurance that all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated

4 Definition

- **Child** – means a child or young person under the age of 18 years
- **Child abuse** – means a sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, whether or not a criminal proceeding in relation to the offence has been commenced or concluded, sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child or significant neglect of a child.
- **Child Safety Standards** – as made under section 17(1) of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- **Grooming** – is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child or young person for sexual activity later. Grooming can include communicating or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent or carer.

5 Roles, responsibilities, and delegations

5.1 ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

All staff, volunteers, students, and board members are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing, and empowerment of children by:

- adhering to South East Community Links child safe policy at all times / upholding South East Community Links 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 children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination
- promoting the safety, participation, and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to SECL's Child Safety Officer (Marlena Kupczyk) leadership, and ensure any allegation to reported to the police or child protection
- reporting any child safety concerns to SECL's Child Safety Officer (Marlena Kupczyk)/ leadership

- 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.
- promote the human rights, safety, and wellbeing of all children
- provide a physical environment that is respectful of Aboriginal children's culture and SECL's values and practice is consistent with that of the Aboriginal culture
- demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries
- consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children
- treat all children and young people with respect, regardless of race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, cultural background, financial situation, disability or other characteristics. Create an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe, and inclusive for all children and their families.
- participate in all compulsory training and professional development including training on child safety and wellbeing
- identify and mitigate risks to children's safety and wellbeing as required by SECL's risk assessment and management policy or process
- report all suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse as required by The Family Law Act (1975) and Children Youth and Families Act (2005) and by SECL's policy and procedure on internal and external reporting

5.2 UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

All SECL staff, volunteers, students and board members must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm
- develop a relationship with a child or young person that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example by offering gifts)
- display behaviours or engage with a child or young person in ways that are not in a professional context
- discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language, gestures or images in the presence of a child or young person
- treat a child or young person unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity
- photograph or video a child or young person except in accordance with the Social Media policy or where required for duty of care purposes
- have contact with a child or young person outside of works hours except when needed for professional guidance and support and parental permission has been sought
- condone or participate in illegal, unsafe or abusive behaviour towards children, including physical, sexual or psychological abuse, ill-treatment, neglect or grooming
- exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- use hurtful, discriminatory, or offensive behaviour or language with children
- fail to report information to appropriate authorities if they suspect a child has been abused
- persistently criticise and/or denigrate a child
- deliberately prevent a child from forming friendships
- verbally assault a child or create a climate of fear

6 Breach of Code of Conduct

All SECL staff, volunteers, students, and board members who breach this Child Safety Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with the Performance Management (disciplinary procedure), relevant industrial agreements, professional code, or terms of engagement.

All SECL staff, volunteers, students and board members are obliged to report any breaches of this Code of Conduct to the Child Safety Officer or appropriate person. In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with SECL's Child Safety and Reporting policy and may be subject to referral to police.

If a SECL staff, volunteer, student or board member suspects that this Code of Conduct has been breached by another staff member, volunteer, student or board member, they will:

- Act in the best interest of the child or young person
- Act promptly to ensure that the child or young person is safe
- Promptly follow SECL reporting procedures

7 Related legislation, policies, and procedures

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety and Reporting
- Performance Management (disciplinary procedure)
- Risk Management Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Workplace Behaviours
- The Family Law Act
- Children Youth and Families Act (2005)