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Child Protection Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children involved in SGSCC programs and activities. SGSCC is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment where children are protected from harm, abuse, and exploitation.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all SGSCC staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other individuals who interact with children during the course of SGSCC's activities. It covers all programs, services, and events conducted by SGSCC that involve children under the age of 18.

3. Definitions

- **Child:** Any person under the age of 18 years.
- **Child Abuse:** Any act or failure to act that results in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child. Child abuse can include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- **Mandatory Reporting:** The legal obligation to report suspected cases of child abuse to relevant authorities. This obligation applies to certain professionals, including teachers, healthcare workers, and those in positions of authority over children.

4. Policy Statement

SGSCC is committed to the safety and well-being of all children and has zero tolerance for child abuse. All children have the right to feel safe, respected, and valued. SGSCC will take all necessary steps to prevent child abuse and to respond promptly and effectively if abuse is suspected or reported.

5. Responsibilities

- **Chief Executive Officer (CEO):** Holds overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation and enforcement of this policy. The CEO is also responsible for reporting any serious incidents to relevant authorities.
- **RTO Manager:** implement effective risk management strategies. This includes identifying and mitigating risks to the safety and wellbeing of all students, particularly children.

- **Student Support Services:** ensure that learners including those who are minors, have access to support services that can address issues related to safety, welfare, and protection. This encompass ensuring that children are in a safe learning environment, free from abuse or neglect.
- **All Staff and Volunteers:** all staff working with children (under 18 years) have valid Working With Children Check and Police Clearance. This is part of broader child protection obligations that SGSCC must observe. Staff and volunteers are expected to maintain the highest standards of professional behavior in their interactions with children.
- **Parents and Guardians:** Encouraged to communicate any concerns about their child's safety to SGSCC staff or the Child Protection Officer.

6. Code of Conduct

- **Professional Boundaries:** Staff and volunteers must maintain appropriate boundaries with children at all times. This includes avoiding any behavior that could be misinterpreted as inappropriate or harmful.
- **Respect and Dignity:** All children must be treated with respect and dignity. Staff and volunteers should listen to children's views and take their concerns seriously.
- **Safe Environment:** SGSCC will ensure that all facilities and environments where children are present are safe and free from hazards. This includes conducting regular risk assessments and implementing necessary safety measures.

7. Recruitment and Training

- **Recruitment:** SGSCC will conduct thorough background checks, including Working with Children Checks (WWCC) and Police Check, on all staff, volunteers, and contractors who work with or have access to children. References will be verified, and gaps in employment history will be investigated.
- **Training:** All staff and volunteers who work with children will receive mandatory child protection training. This training will cover recognizing signs of abuse, reporting procedures, maintaining professional boundaries, and understanding legal responsibilities.
- **Induction:** New staff and volunteers will receive a comprehensive induction that includes a review of the Child Protection Policy and the Code of Conduct.

8. Reporting and Responding to Child Abuse

- **Reporting Obligations:** All staff and volunteers must report any suspicions or allegations of

child abuse immediately to the Child Protection Officer. In cases of immediate danger, staff should contact emergency services.

- **Mandatory Reporting:** SGSCC will comply with mandatory reporting laws, ensuring that any suspected child abuse is reported to the appropriate authorities, such as the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) or the police, in accordance with state and federal laws.
- **Confidentiality:** All reports of child abuse will be handled with strict confidentiality. Information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to protect the child and to fulfill legal obligations.
- **Investigation:** The Child Protection Officer will coordinate the investigation of any allegations of child abuse, in conjunction with law enforcement or child protection agencies if required. All investigations will be conducted promptly and fairly.
- **Support for the Child:** SGSCC will provide appropriate support for any child who is the subject of abuse or allegations of abuse. This may include counselling services, medical care, and ensuring the child's safety within the program or activity.

9. Record Keeping

- **Documentation:** Detailed records of any allegations, reports, or investigations of child abuse will be maintained securely by the Child Protection Officer. These records will be kept in accordance with legal requirements and SGSCC's record retention policy.
- **Access to Records:** Access to child protection records will be restricted to the RTO Manager, CEO, and relevant authorities as required by law.

10. Risk Management

- **Risk Assessments:** Regular risk assessments will be conducted for all SGSCC activities involving children. These assessments will identify potential risks to children's safety and outline strategies to mitigate these risks.
- **Supervision:** Children participating in SGSCC programs and activities will be appropriately supervised at all times by trained and qualified staff or volunteers.
- **Online Safety:** For activities involving online interactions with children, SGSCC will implement measures to protect children from online abuse, cyberbullying, and exposure to inappropriate content.

11. Monitoring and Review

- **Policy Monitoring:** The implementation of this policy will be monitored regularly by the Child

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Protection Officer and the CEO to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with legal requirements.

- **Annual Review:** This policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently if required, to ensure it remains current and effective in protecting children. Updates will be communicated to all staff, volunteers, and stakeholders.

12. Compliance

- **Legal Compliance:** SGSCC will comply with all relevant child protection laws, including the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW), the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW), and any other applicable legislation.
- **Disciplinary Actions:** Any staff member or volunteer found to have breached this policy may face disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or engagement with SGSCC.

13. References

- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- SGSCC Code of Conduct
- SRT0 2025 Standard 4.3 Risks to VET students, staff and the RTO are identified and managed. Where the RTO offers training or assessment to VET students aged under 18, risks to their safety and wellbeing are identified and managed consistent with principles for child safe organisations, having regard to the training content and mode(s) of delivery.
- SRT0 2025 Standard 21 Compliance with Commonwealth, State and Territory and regulatory requirements relevant to its operations.
- National Code 2018 – Standard 5. Younger Overseas Students outlines several specific child protection obligations for education providers.
- National Code 2018 – Standard 6. Critical Incident Policy: Providers must have processes to deal with emergencies and situations where the safety or welfare of students under 18 is at risk.
- National Code – Standard 10. Compliant and Appeal Process: Providers must have a transparent complaint and appeal process that is accessible to all students, including minors. This ensures that students under 18 can report concerns related to child protection or welfare

issues, and these concerns must be addressed in a timely and fair manner.