

# Child-Safe Environment Policy



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## OVERVIEW

The University is committed to the protection and wellbeing of children in accordance with:

- the [Children's Protection Act 1993 \(SA\)](#) ("the Act"), which requires appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure that child-safe environments are established and maintained, and
- the Australian Aid Program ([AusAID](#)) [Child Protection Policy](#).

## SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This Policy applies to all staff, students, title holders, contractors and volunteers, and relates specifically to their contact with children.

The Act defines a child as a person under 18 years of age.

Implementation of this policy will be carried out in accordance with the University's Code of Conduct and the Academic Board Statement on Undue Influence. Any attempts to improperly exert pressure or influence actions or decisions made pursuant to this policy must be reported in accordance with the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy.

## POLICY PRINCIPLES

1. The University values children and seeks to protect them.
2. The University is committed to providing child-safe environments both on-campus and during University-related activities off-campus.
3. The University's recruitment processes aim to support child-safe environments.
4. The University expects all staff, students, titleholders, contractors and volunteers to meet the standards of behaviour in its [Code of Conduct](#), [Student Charter](#) and Behaviour and Conduct Policy.
5. The University encourages and supports the prompt reporting of allegations of child abuse, neglect and exploitation.
6. The University aims to manage all allegations of child abuse, neglect and exploitation sensitively and expeditiously, and in accordance with principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.
7. The University is committed to supporting mandated notifiers under the Act to meet their legal obligation to notify of any reasonable suspicion of child abuse, neglect or exploitation.
8. The University aims to meet all research ethics and compliance requirements, including the standards in the Australian Aid Program ([AusAID](#)) [Child Protection Policy](#).
9. The University will support all persons in prescribed positions by providing access to training and resources to foster an understanding of individual and organisational obligations for child safety and protection.
10. The University is committed to maintaining confidentiality when dealing with and reporting on all allegations of child abuse, neglect and exploitation, except as required by law.

## Authorities

<b>Authority Category</b>	<b>Authority</b>	<b>Delegation Holder</b>	<b>Limits</b>
Child protection	Investigate allegations and report incidents of child abuse, neglect and exploitation to Executive Dean and Legal & Risk	Heads of School/Branch Heads	
Child protection	Provide legal advice to managers and staff reporting incidents of child abuse, neglect and exploitation	General Counsel and Executive Director, Legal & Risk	
Child Protection	Consideration of reports and recommendations. Report the outcomes to the Vice-Chancellor and President	Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic)	

## PROCEDURES

### 1. Maintaining a child-safe environment

**Responsibility: Staff, students, titleholders, contractors, and volunteers**

- a) will ensure the protection and wellbeing of children by complying with the Act, this Policy, and the AusAID Child Protection Policy where applicable.

### 2. Working with Children

#### 2.1 Recruitment of personnel to work closely with children

**Responsibility: Heads of School, Branch Heads**

- a) will follow the [Pre-Employment Screening Procedure](#) for prospective staff, students, titleholders, contractors, and volunteers by:
  - i. assessing whether a position is a “prescribed position”; and
  - ii. ensuring that all other requirements of the Procedure have been met including the need for ongoing clearances in accordance with the [Health, Safety and Wellbeing \(HSW\) Training Needs Analysis \(TNA\) and Training Plan](#).

**Responsibility: Prospective staff, students, titleholders, contractors, and volunteers**

- b) must follow the [Pre-Employment Screening Procedure](#) and undertake a [Department for Communities and Social Inclusion \(DCSI\)](#) check prior to appointment to a prescribed position.

#### 2.2 Personnel currently working closely with children

**Responsibility: Heads of School, Branch Heads**

- a) will ensure that current personnel in prescribed positions are aware of their relevant obligations under the Act and this Policy.
- b) will assess whether current staff, students, titleholders, contractors, and volunteers are working in prescribed positions, and if they are, will request that the person so identified undergo the same checks and training as specified in the [Pre-Employment Screening Procedure](#) for prospective employees.
- c) will maintain a record of DCSI clearances and training requirements for persons in prescribed positions in accordance with the [Health, Safety and Wellbeing \(HSW\) Training Needs Analysis \(TNA\) and Training Plan](#).
- d) will ensure that persons in prescribed positions have a valid DCSI clearance.

**Responsibility: Current staff, students, titleholders, contractors, and volunteers**

- e) who consider that they may occupy a prescribed position:
  - i. must notify their Head of School or Branch Head,
  - ii. must undertake a DCSI check, as soon as directed by the Head of School or Branch Head;
  - iii. will complete and submit the relevant forms for renewal of the DCSI check in order to maintain a valid DCSI check clearance whilst in the prescribed position.

**2.3 Students working with children**

**Responsibility: Students undertaking clinical placements, teacher education placements or any other University activity that involves regular contact with children**

- a) must complete screening checks and training, and sign and comply with any code of conduct relevant to their placement or activity as required by the placement provider, before working with children.

**2.4 Research activities involving children**

**Responsibility: Researchers**

- a) will advise their Head of School or Branch Head when their research involves working with children.
- b) must ensure that research involving children is conducted in compliance with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) and [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#), in particular the chapter [Children and Young People](#).
- c) will obtain clearances for working with children as may be required by this Policy and/or the University's [Pre-Employment Screening Procedure](#).

**Responsibility: Researchers working on a Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) funded activity**

- d) will comply with requirements in Clauses 2.4 a) to c) of this procedure.
- e) must undertake an appropriate international criminal history check if they have worked outside Australia and have not been screened under the DCSI check process.
- f) must sign, and comply with the Australian Aid Program ([AusAID](#)) [Child Protection Code of Conduct](#) and provide the original signed copy to their Head of School or Branch Head.
- g) must ensure that any individual or organisation they engage as a sub-contractor on the activity, complies with the Australian Aid Program ([AusAid](#)) [Child Protection Policy](#), including obtaining required criminal history checks.

**Responsibility: Heads of School, Branch Heads**

- h) will review each research activity involving contact with children to determine whether the researcher(s) is in a prescribed position.
- i) will ensure that researchers whose research activities involve working with children are aware of their obligations under this Policy.
- j) must ensure that University researchers have appropriate DCSI or international criminal history checks as required by this Policy.
- k) will provide copies of the Australian Aid Program ([AusAID](#)) [Child Protection Code of Conduct](#) that have been signed by researchers within the School to the Research Branch.

**Responsibility: Research Branch**

- l) will assess each DFAT-funded activity to determine whether it will involve children and if so advise the researcher(s) and Head of School or Branch Head about the requirement to comply with this Policy and the AusAid Child Protection Policy.

**2.5 Off-campus activities involving children (e.g. field trips/camps)**

**Responsibility: Staff, students, titleholders, contractors, volunteers organising off-campus activities involving children**

- a) will ensure that children involved in off-campus activities are safe from harm.
- b) will act in accordance with the University's [Health, Safety and Wellbeing \(HSW\) Handbook](#) to ensure that appropriate hazard management is undertaken to avoid the likelihood of injury to children.

**3. Reporting allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation of children**

**Responsibility: Staff, students, titleholders, contractors, volunteers**

- a) must immediately report any allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation to their Head of School or Branch Head, or other appropriate person.
- b) who suspect, on reasonable grounds that a child is being abused, neglected or exploited, should report it to the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78).
- c) must treat all such allegations confidentially and ensure that information is shared only between people involved with the reporting and investigation of the allegations.

**Responsibility: Heads of School, Branch Heads**

- d) must immediately inform the Executive Dean or Head of Division of any allegations, complaints or incidents of abuse, neglect or exploitation of children.
- e) in consultation with the Executive Dean or Head of Division, will immediately contact Legal and Risk, so that allegations may be assessed for the need for referral to SAPOL and/or other relevant external agencies. If allegations concern the behaviour of staff or students overseas, then the matter may be referred to the Australian Federal Police.

**Responsibility: Executive Dean**

- f) will manage allegations reported to them in accordance with the Enterprise Agreement and the Student Grievance Resolution Process

**4. Child-safe training**

**Responsibility: Staff, students, titleholders, contractors, and volunteers**

- a) will complete an induction and/or training on child safety and protection, as required.

**Responsibility: Heads of School, Branch Heads**

- b) will ensure that every person in a prescribed position completes the required training specified in the [Pre-Employment Screening Procedure](#).

**5. Disciplinary action**

**Responsibility: Heads of School, Branch Heads**

- a) where it is found that a child's safety is jeopardised, the University will bring disciplinary action against a staff member or student, in accordance with the University of Adelaide's [Enterprise Agreement](#) (for staff), and the [Student Grievance Resolution Process](#) or [Student Misconduct Rules](#) and Chapter 3, [Statutes of the University](#) (for students)

## DEFINITIONS

**Child safe environment** – means a respectful and protective environment where children can participate safe from harm in the University’s learning, teaching and research activities.

For the purposes of this policy, the University has adopted the definition of abuse in the Act.

**Abuse or neglect**, in relation to a child, means -

- (a) sexual abuse of the child; or
- (b) physical or emotional abuse of the child, or neglect of the child, to the extent that:
  - (i) the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, physical or psychological injury detrimental to the child's wellbeing; or
  - (ii) the child's physical or psychological development is in jeopardy,

For the purposes of this policy, the University has adopted the definition of child exploitation in the AusAID Child Protection Policy.

**Child exploitation and abuse** means - one or more of the following:

- committing or coercing another person to commit an act or acts of abuse against a child.
- possessing, controlling, producing, distributing, obtaining or transmitting child exploitation material
- committing or coercing another person to commit an act or acts of grooming or online grooming.

For definitions regarding **regular contact**, **prescribed positions** and **mandated notifiers** see the [Pre-Employment Screening Information Sheet](#).

<b>RMO File No.</b>	2014/2164
<b>Policy custodian</b>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic)
<b>Responsible policy officer</b>	Executive Director, Division of Academic and Student Engagement
<b>Endorsed by</b>	Academic Board on 5 November 2014
<b>Approved by</b>	Vice-Chancellor and President on 6 November 2014
<b>Related Policies</b>	AusAID Child Protection Policy AusAID Child Protection Code of Conduct Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research Child Safe Environments: Principles of Good Practice Children Protection Act 101 Code of Conduct Complaints by Staff Policy and Guidelines Fair Treatment Policy Health, Safety and Welfare (HSW) Handbook IT Acceptable Use and Security Policy Legal Compliance Policy National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research Pre-Employment Screening Procedure Protecting Children is Everyone's Business: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009 - 2020 Recruitment Policy Responsible Conduct of Research Policy Risk Policy Student Charter Student Grievance Resolution Process Student Misconduct Rules United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child University of Adelaide Enterprise Agreement
<b>Related legislation</b>	Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA)
<b>Effective from</b>	1 January 2015
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<b>Contact for queries about the policy</b>	Student Affairs, tel: (08) 8313 7503 or (08) 8313 4456