



Child Protection Statement of Commitment



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PURPOSE

The purpose of this Child Protection Statement of Commitment is to outline the expected daily behaviours, interactions and conduct of team members required to support children, prohibit any form of child abuse or neglect and ensure mandatory reporting obligations are met.

SCOPE

As part of G8 Education's commitment to creating a child safe organisation, this Child Protection Statement of Commitment applies to all team members, including leaders, volunteers and others who may represent G8 Education in any capacity.

DEFINITIONS

Statement of Commitment is a collection of rules, company expectations, social norms and responsibilities that include what is and is not acceptable or expected behaviour or proper practice.

Child Protection means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child abuse and neglect is defined by The World Health Organisation as:

"All forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power".

The five main subtypes of child abuse and neglect:

1. Physical abuse/ assault
2. Emotional abuse/ ill-treatment
3. Neglect
4. Sexual abuse/ sexual offence
5. Exposure to family violence

All forms of child abuse and neglect are classed as Reportable Conduct.

Disclosure refers to the way children or young people let other people know they are being or have been abused.

Grooming is the action/s by an adult of preparing a child for sexual activity. Often this will involve progressive desensitisation to sexual activity (such as with increased physical contact or exposure to sexual material and acts), finding opportunities to be alone unsupervised together, encouraging secrecy in the relationship or utilising power and control over the child through threats, use of force or authority to make the child fearful of reporting unwanted behaviour.

Mandatory Reporters are people who have regular contact with vulnerable people and are legally required to make a report when abuse is observed or suspected.

Mandatory Reporting is the legislative requirement for selected classes of people to report suspected child abuse and neglect to government authorities.

G8 Child Protection Reporting Standard requires reporting of any reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed or neglected or is at risk of harm or neglect.

CHILD PROTECTION, SAFETY AND WELLBEING RESPONSIBILITIES AND BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES

All G8 Education team members are expected to uphold the rights of children as a primary consideration and always act in the best interests of the child, consistent with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

All team members and volunteers have a legal and ethical obligation to act in order to protect any child who is at risk of abuse or neglect. The G8 Education Child Protection Reporting Standard requires all team members who suspect on reasonable grounds that a child is or could be at risk of suffering abuse or neglect, or received a disclosure of abuse or neglect are required to complete a Child Protection Report or a Child Wellbeing Form depending on the severity of the abuse/neglect.

Whilst everyone has a moral and social responsibility to report concerns about child abuse, some professionals, including G8 Educators and Nominated Supervisors are legally required to make a mandatory report if, on the reasonable grounds, they suspect that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect.

All team members have an obligation to intervene if they observe a team member engaging in any prohibited actions and avoid acts or omissions (failures) that could be reasonably foreseen to harm children engaging with the organisation. This harm includes all forms of child abuse and neglect, and failure to apply the G8 Education Child Protection Reporting Standard to any reasonable suspicion allegation or disclosure.

I will as a team member acknowledge I am responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- Upholding the rights of children and young people as a primary consideration and always act in the best interests of the child, consistent with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Adhering to the relevant Australian and State specific legislation, G8 Education Child Protection Policy and other organisational policies
- Immediately intervene if you observe a team member engage in any prohibited actions
- Raising concerns with management if risks to child safety are identified in any of the activities, facilities, structures, procedures or staffing practices at the Centre or activities associated with the Centre
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse and neglect
- Reporting and acting on any behavioural complaints, concerns or observed breaches regarding the Code of Conduct
- Reporting any concerns, allegations, disclosures or observations of child abuse to the relevant person or authority as outlined in the G8 Education reporting procedures in line with mandatory reporting requirements, including Reportable Conduct Schemes
- Reporting to Child Protection Agencies when there is reasonable belief that a child's parent has not or is unlikely to protect their child from harm or neglect
- Respecting the privacy of children and their families by keeping all information regarding Child Protection concerns confidential, only discussing information with the relevant people to follow reporting procedures
- Treating all children and young people with respect, regardless of race, colour, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, ethnic or social origin, culture, disability or other status
- Empowering children, young people and families to be heard and participate in decisions that affect them
- Promoting respectful and positive behaviour in children
- Supporting all children and families to feel welcome and valued at the Centre through inclusive practices
- Actively promoting cultural safety and inclusion
- Listening to children and responding to them appropriately
- Working with children in an open and transparent way – other adults should always know about their child's day
- Always observing professional boundaries with children, including when seeing children enrolled at the Centre outside the workplace
- Conducting yourself in a manner consistent with the values of G8 Education

PROHIBITED ACTIONS

To protect and support children, G8 team members are not to abuse their position of authority and trust in any way that may cause harm to children. I will not engage in prohibited actions including:-

Engaging in behaviours of concern

- Developing overly personal relationships with children including developing special relationships, displaying favouritism or engaging in unnecessary physical interactions including doing things of a private nature that the child can do for themselves.
- Exposing children to adult themes or concepts.
- Using inappropriate language in the presence of children.
- Wearing inappropriate clothing that may accentuate breasts or genitals.

Engaging in unacceptable behaviour

- Breaching the confidentiality and privacy of children and families.
- Engaging in discriminatory or racist behaviour.
- Using unacceptable practices that do not align with values and required conduct of team members towards children.

Engaging in unlawful behaviour

- Engaging in grooming behaviours.
- Actions which cause physical, psychological, emotional, sexual or interpersonal harm to a child.
- Any form of corporal punishment or unreasonable discipline likely to cause emotional or physical harm. This may include:
 - o Intimidation, restraining, smacking, shaking, kicking, pushing, dragging, grabbing, exerting force or throwing an object at a child, or
 - o Humiliating, threatening, bullying behaviours or any form of verbal abuse toward a child including yelling.
- Depriving a child of basic needs such as food, shelter or medical care.
- Failing to fulfil responsibilities as a mandatory reporter, or utilising mandatory reporting obligations not in good faith as a means of causing distress, detriment or harassment. This includes:
 - o Failure to reduce or remove risk of a child becoming the victim of child abuse and neglect
 - o Concealing a child abuse or neglect offence or offenses
 - o Ignoring or disregarding any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse and neglect

BREACHES OF THE CHILD PROTECTION STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

All team members working with children have a duty of care to support and protect children. The Child Protection Statement of Commitment is breached if a team member:

- Does not perform expected behaviours in this Statement of Commitment when it would be reasonable to do so in the circumstances.
- Engages in prohibited actions outlined in this Statement of Commitment.
- Fails to comply with their mandatory reporting obligations.
- Acts or fails to act in a way that causes harm to someone the person owes a duty of care.
- Fails to report professional boundary violations or behaviours of concern regarding colleagues and volunteers.

Team members have a duty to observe the Statement of Commitment and ensure that no breaches occur. Breaches should be reported to a Manager once known or suspected, or reported through other means provided by G8 Education as outlined in the Child Protection Practice Manual.

AGREEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

All team members are required to read and understand the Child Protection Statement of Commitment during orientation and, thereafter, annually to ensure they are aware of and will abide by the obligations set out. Reviewing The Child Protection Statement of Commitment also provides an opportunity to reflect on their own values, behaviours and drivers to ensure ongoing alignment with G8 Education. If a team member is unclear or requires further clarification on any aspect of the Statement of Commitment, the team member should seek support from their Team Leader, Manager or any Executive Leader.

Failure to report a belief or suspicion on reasonable grounds, that a child is being abused or neglected, may attract personal fines under state-based Child Protection legislation. In addition, failure to comply with G8 Education reporting standards that incorporate external mandatory reporting obligations is a serious breach of employment conditions that may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment with G8 Education.

All team members are required to indicate their understanding of the Child Protection Statement of Commitment and agree to abide by The Child Protection Statement of Commitment by signing the declaration contained in Schedule A and returning it to their Centre Manager and completing mandatory training.

I, _____ (print full name), as a Team Member of G8 Education, declare and agree that:

I have read and understood the contents of the G8 Education Child Protection Statement of Commitment (the Commitment).

I understand that the Commitment sets out standards of behaviour expected and required of me as a Team Member of G8 Education.

I understand that G8 Education may amend or replace the Commitment or any part of it from time to time and that the Statement of Commitment does not form part of my employment agreement with G8 education or otherwise operate to impose contractual obligations upon G8 Education.

I understand that failure to comply with the Commitment and/or disclose any known breaches of the Commitment by myself or any other Team Member is a serious breach of the conditions of my employment which may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of my employment with G8 Education.

Signed:

(Print name)

Date:



