
Aim of this Policy

This policy outlines the commitment of Regional Skills Training (RST) to the safety, protection and wellbeing of children and young people through providing child-safe and child-friendly environments where children and young people are respected, valued and encouraged to be their best.

The safety and protection of children and young people is the highest priority.

RST employees and contractors (RST Staff) must comply with the child safe environment provisions of the *Children & Young People (Safety) Act 2017* and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations which relate to creating child safe environment. These responsibilities are embedded within our policies and processes for employees and contractors of RST.

Related Policies

CODE OF PRACTICE

The RST Code of Practice outlines the five core principles that underpin our flexible, innovative and industry appropriate training:

- > Act with professionalism, fairness and integrity.
- > Advocate for our students and the Primary Industries sector.
- > Create strong partnerships with employers and industry.
- > Provide a supportive but challenging learning environment for students and staff.
- > Continue to evolve and embrace new technologies.

The policy further outlines RST's committed to providing an environment which is safe, equitable and which promotes a confident and productive training and assessment environment, free from discrimination, bullying and harassment.

The Code of Practice is available on the RST website and is provided to new employees in the company induction. In addition to this, it is always available for staff review in the internal Knowledge Management System (KMS), or on our website (www.rst.edu.au) for students and other stakeholders.

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

The staff code of conduct outlines RST's expectations in relation to staff behaviour.

Staff working with students, have a particular duty of care that arises out of a fiduciary relationship. Employees have a responsibility to ensure that the physical and emotional wellbeing of students is safeguarded and that their own behaviour is guided by their duty of care to the students.

The Staff Code of Conduct Policy is provided to new employees as part of their company induction. In addition to this, it is always available for staff review in the internal Knowledge Management System (KMS).

OTHER POLICIES

Other policies and procedures that relate to child safe environments include:

- > Access and Equity Policy
- > Bullying Harassment and Victimisation Policy
- > Complaints and Appeals Policy

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- > Computer Use and Social Media Policy
 - > Confidentiality Policy
 - > Privacy Policy
 - > Student Code of Conduct
 - > Student Transport Policy
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Expectations of Staff

All RST staff will:

- > Demonstrate the highest standards of behaviour in their professional and personal lives
 - > Report any actual or suspected incident or risk of harm to a Child or Young Person to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78
 - > Implement, monitor or report on any recommendations by management in relation to any assessment or investigation on the provision of safe environments
 - > Value and respect the contributions of Children and Young People in continuous improvement activities and service development
 - > Ensure every decision is made in the best interest of the Child or Young Person
 - > Participate in training and ongoing professional development activities to obtain and maintain the necessary skills and knowledge to meet mandatory requirements
 - > When engaging with Children, Young People and their families/carers:
 - Provide information about their rights and responsibilities
 - Listen and act upon any concerns raised
 - Facilitate access to appropriate support and feedback mechanisms including the Complaints Policy and Procedure and learner support services
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Child Safe Environments at RST

HAZARDS AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS

Training and learning experiences provided at RST may pose unique circumstances to consider when providing child safe learning environments. RST ensures that learning environments consider the appropriate risk control measures for students, guests and employees.

Control measure examples include:

- > Ensuring students, guests and staff hold basic awareness of Workplace Health & Safety (WHS) and hazards for the relevant activities (eg handling animals, chemicals or operating machinery).
 - > Providing physical barriers, safeguards or securing access from hazards such as chemicals, electrical installations, machinery and equipment etc.
 - > Establishing controls for the movement of vehicles, plant and equipment around the workplace.
 - > Completion of risk assessments for proposed workshop activities that may pose a hazard or risk to students.
 - > For students who are under the age of 18, RST staff maintain contact with parents or guardians in the event of non-attendance at workshops or training to confirm their welfare.
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- > If concerned about a Child or Young Person's wellbeing, communicating with their parents, guardian or their school as appropriate to provide support in the circumstances.

RECRUITMENT AND WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK CLEARANCE

RST applies best hiring practices for recruitment and screening of our staff and our requirement for a non-prohibited Working With Children Check (WWCC) is included in all recruitment advertisements.

Staff have the requirement of a non-prohibited clearance from a WWCC embedded into the terms and conditions of their employment contract, with the process of checks commencing prior to their employment start date. While a WWCC is pending, staff will not work with Children or Young Persons. If a prohibited or excluded person's result is returned, employment will be terminated in accordance with the contract provisions.

WWCC are managed using the Department of Human Services (DHS) Screening online register to track clearance outcomes, renewal dates and for notifications of any change to non-prohibited status.

RST understands its' obligations under the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016* to report assessable criteria if made aware of this for our staff. To ensure timely reporting, the Senior Management Team will complete a Section 19 report to the DHS Screening Unit within 48 hours of learning of assessable information.

STAFF TRAINING

Ongoing training is provided to RST staff to deliver child safe environments, including the requirements of mandated notifiers under the *Children & Young People (Safety) Act 2017*.

All employees in positions that work directly with Children or Young Persons will undertake Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care (RRHAN-EC) training and renew these every 3 years. Additional training or resources may be identified to develop the skills of employees to provide for the wellbeing of Children and Young People.

Reporting Harm or Risk of Harm

RST will take any reasonable action required to ensure that Children and Young People engaging with our services are kept safe from harm or risk of harm.

All RST staff who work directly with Children and Young People are mandated notifiers, as defined under the *Children & Young People (Safety) Act 2017*, Clause 30.

RST staff (mandated notifiers or otherwise) who hold reasonable suspicions of harm or risk of harm, are encouraged to use the Mandatory Reporting Guide and reporting resources available through the RRHAN-EC training, and [Education SA website](#).

In the case of immediate risk or harm to a Child or Young person, RST staff will contact SA Police on 000.

Mandated notifiers must lodge a report to the CARL on 13 14 78 as soon as practicable if they have reasonable suspicion that a Child or Young Person is at risk of harm or is being harmed. An employee of RST who is not a mandated notifier should also report any reasonable suspicion of harm through CARL.

All adults at RST must report suspicion of child sexual abuse to the police. All adults are responsible for protecting a child from sexual abuse. Failure to do so is a crime under the Criminal Law Consolidation Act.

RST will support any staff member in making a report to CARL.

After a report has been made to authorities, RST staff must prepare an internal report for RST management sent by email to ceo@rst.edu.au.

RST staff do not necessarily complete their duty of care requirements in making a report to CARL– they may still have a role in supporting the Child or Young Person. For example, concerns can be reported to the CEO for further support, or to ensure that RST takes all reasonable steps to keep a Child or Young Person and others safe and supported while using our services.

ALLEGATIONS OF HARM OR RISK OF HARM BY AN RST EMPLOYEE

In addition to the reporting requirements detailed above, anyone, who holds concerns regarding an RST staff member, can report this directly to the CEO at ceo@rst.edu.au.

Any allegations will be taken seriously and processed in accordance with the RST Complaints & Appeals Policy to ensure appropriate investigation and procedural fairness processes are followed.

RST management will take the following actions:

- > Ensure students are safe and supported.
- > If an RST staff member is involved, then as appropriate:
 - Eliminate direct contact with Children and Young People until the matter is resolved; or
 - Require the staff member to take leave while being paid.
- > Liaise with the Child Abuse Report Line and police and follow directions.
- > Investigate the issue (if supported by the Police/DCP) ensuring culturally and procedural fairness processes are followed.
- > Make and implement recommendations based on investigations.
- > Keep the matter confidential where possible, for natural justice purposes.

RECORD REQUIREMENTS

The privacy of students and families will be respected during any mandatory reporting process, documentation of concerns will be held securely, and only relevant parties will be informed of pertinent information.

For mandatory reporting or related documentation, all documents and communication will be kept in adherence to the RST Privacy Policy. This information will be kept securely and separately to the student record.

Complaints or Feedback from Children, Young People and their Families/Carers

Children and Young People and their families are encouraged to communicate with any RST staff about any concerns they may have about their safety and wellbeing. Communication can be through conversation, completing a Complaints & Appeals form, email or other messages as the student feels comfortable with. These concerns will be taken seriously and treated with respect and dignity.

All complaints and feedback will be dealt with promptly, sensitively and fairly.

RST management will follow the following procedures:

- > Listen to the complaint/feedback and make a record of it
 - > Advise the time expected for an outcome
 - > Respond to the complainant with an outcome
 - > Clearly document and securely store decisions and actions taken in response to complaints and feedback
 - > Make sure that procedural fairness is followed at all times
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Breach of Policies

Inappropriate behaviour and conduct will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or agreement. RST may immediately terminate the contract of employment if an employee engages in misconduct which includes but is not limited to:

- Breach of confidentiality
- Intentional or knowing breach of RST's policies and regulatory requirements
- Causing serious or imminent risk to the health and safety of another person
- Victimisation, harassment or bullying

Access to this Policy

This policy is available on the RST website and is provided to new employees in the company induction. In addition to this, it is always available for staff review in the internal Knowledge Management System (KMS), or on our website (www.rst.edu.au) for students and other stakeholders.

Review of this Policy

This policy and related RST processes will be reviewed at least every 5 years, or as otherwise required.

Any changes within the policy are communicated electronically to staff at the time of the update.

A new child safe environments compliance statement will be lodged with the department of Human Services each time this policy is reviewed and updated.

Approver Name	Signature	Date
Caroline Graham		20/03/24
