



## **CHILD SAFE POLICY /CODE OF CONDUCT**

**POLICY NAME :** Child Safe Policy and staff Code of conduct

**The SailAway Readers Child Safe Policy is in place to ensure the commitment by management and staff to provide a child safe environment, by providing a code of conduct and policies to ensure that everyone is kept safe from harm and the appropriate reporting pathways are in place.**

### **AIM OF CHILD SAFE POLICY**

This aim of the Child Safe Policy is to protect the safety of children under our instruction during classes to prevent abuse from occurring. We aim to promote the empowerment of children through participation, giving them confidence to have control over the circumstances in their lives.

The aim of the Child Safe Policy is to provide a framework where should an allegation or complaint of abuse arise, the appropriate processes are in place where the complaint is treated seriously and is fully investigated with confidentiality and discretion.

The Child Safe Policy and our Code of Conduct provide clear expectations for all management, staff and instructors at SailAway Readers for the appropriate behavioural actions around children.

At SailAway Readers we are committed to the inclusion of all children from diverse backgrounds and cultures, and aim to provide a safe and inclusive environment for all children.

### **SCOPE OF POLICY**

This Child Safe Policy applies to all management, staff, participants and parents who are involved with and/or attend SailAway Readers Studios.

This Child Safe Policy covers all children attending our 1:1 tuition and private classes, giving them a right to feel safe, welcome and have fun, and the confidence to know that their voice is valued and that SailAway Readers will act on any concerns raised by children or their parents.

By adopting a Child Safe policy, SailAway Readers is acting in a preventive manner to help reduce the potential risk and likelihood of risks becoming realised.

## DEFINITIONS

**Child Abuse** can be divided into 4 areas :

**Physical abuse** - when a child suffers or is likely to suffer from significant harm from a non accidental physical injury

**Sexual abuse** - when a child suffers or is likely to suffer from significant harm from sexual abuse such as when a child exploited for sexual gratification.

**Emotional and psychological abuse** - when a child suffers or is likely to suffer emotional or psychological harm that can significantly damage the child's emotional or intellectual health and development.

**Neglect** – occurs when a child's physical development or health has been or is significantly damaged. Can refer to the omission or deprivation of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, supervision, medical care or safety.

Child abuse includes any action that results in the actual or potential harm to a child in circumstances where the child's parent have not protected or are unable to protect the child.

## REPORTING CHILD ABUSE PROCEDURE

If a staff member becomes aware of an incident or allegation of abuse or has reasonable grounds to form a belief of abuse, it is the first responsibility to ensure the child/ren are safe and away from further risk of harm.

**Reasonable grounds for belief** – formed on the reasonable belief that the child is in need of protection, has suffered or likely to suffer harm as the result of a physical or sexual injury, or if the parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child.

Reasonable belief can come about on grounds of notification from the child, from observations of the child, or allegations surrounding the child.

If a staff member/instructor is concerned about the immediate risk to the child, or criminal conduct has occurred, that person must call 000 and report the matter to the Victorian Police immediately.

If a staff member/instructor receives information that leads them to believe that an offense has been committed, mandatory reporting requirements must be met, including reporting firstly to:

Directors of SailAway Readers

Secondly to –

Victorian Police

DHHS Child Protection Unit

Once a complaint or allegation is made to the Management/Director of SailAway Readers, they have a duty of care to make a report to the Victorian Police and DHHS Child Protection unit as soon as possible.

All complaints and allegations must be documented with proof of receipt of complaint/allegation, and Management/Director of SailAway Readers will meet with the complainant in regards to the allegation.

If a staff members/instructor is uncertain as to whether they should make a report to an external authority in regards to a child or if a member/participant of SailAway Readers wishes to voice concern/complaint in regards to a Child Safety issue, seek a meeting and advice from Management/Director at SailAway Readers for guidance in regards to the matter.

If further evidence arises after the first complaint/allegation, or to further strengthen the Reasonable grounds of Belief, another report must be documented and presented to Management/Director of SailAway Readers, the Victorian Police and DHHS Child Protection unit.

SailAway Readers will investigate allegations against a child with procedural fairness, and will work in accordance with Victoria Police and/or DHHS in relation to investigations conducted by these authorities.

## **SCREENING AND RECRUITING OF STAFF MEMBERS**

SailAway Readers applies best practice standards in the recruitment of new staff members, and that the recruitment process includes addressing the Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct with applicants.

Where a position for a new staff member involves responsibility for children, interview questions will revolve around their previous experience in working with children, as well as providing appropriate evidence and references

A valid VIT registration or Working With Children Check will be mandatory for new staff members, and all must pass the screening and recruitment process prior to commencing at SailAway Readers.

New staff members must read, acknowledge and sign the Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct before commencing employment with SailAway Readers.

If an allegation is against a member of staff, the safety of the child is of the utmost importance. The staff member will be removed and stood down from instructing classes while under investigation from the relevant authorities into the seriousness of the allegation.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

- SailAway Readers uses social media platforms for marketing and member resource purposes. Photos and videos may be taken during classes, and then be published on social media platforms. Consent must be given by all members to have their photograph taken and published.
- Educators must tell all members, including children, when they are to take a photo or video, to provide the opportunity for that member to decline and remove themselves from the photo.
- Members/parents/children are not allowed to take photos or videos during classes and place images on social media that contain children within them, even in the background.
- SailAway Readers will not distribute, modify or misuse any image of a child or young person against their wishes or without their knowledge.
- SailAway Readers will not tag or name children in photos or videos on social media platforms. SailAway Readers recognises the right that children have to safety both in their physical and online environments, and actively promotes the wellbeing of all children.

## **POLICY PROMOTION AND REVIEW**

This Child Safe Policy is made available to all parents and guardians of children who attend a SailAway Readers studio.

A copy of the Child Safe Policy is available on the SailAway Readers website for all new and prospective participants.

The Child Safe Policy is communicated to all staff, management and contractors of SailAway Readers.

This Child Safe Policy is reviewed on a biennial basis by SailAway Readers management. Feedback or recommendations for changes can be submitted in writing to Management for review.