

# CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PROTECTION, SAFETY, AND WELFARE POLICY

## 1. Policy Statement

Scripture Union Australia (**SU Australia**) is a child safe organisation and is committed to supporting the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, as adopted by the Council of Australian Governments and amended from time to time.

SU Australia believes that every child matters deeply to God and deserves a safe and meaningful life. SU Australia is committed to achieving this and safeguarding the physical, social, emotional, and spiritual well-being of all children, young people, and families in our care.

This Children and Young People Protection, Safety, and Welfare Policy (**Policy**) demonstrates our commitment to proactively nurture a culture and working environment where all Children and Young People are safe and able to flourish.

This Policy is intended to help our people understand the role they play in upholding this commitment and to empower and equip our people to champion a child-safe culture.

## 2. Scope

All Children and Young People, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from harm and abuse.

This Policy applies to all SU Australia Associated Persons. All SU Australia Associated Persons are expected to have the utmost commitment to:

- ensuring that Children and Young People are protected from all forms of harm and abuse;
- the views of children, young people, and their caregivers are sought in all matters and decisions relating to them;
- ensuring that all concerns and allegations in relation to child abuse and the harm of children are responded to appropriately to enhance our child protection practices and procedures; and
- ensuring that all legislative obligations to work with children are complied with.

All SU Australia Associated Persons are also expected to abide by this Policy and all other relevant SU Australia Policies and Procedures including

- [Conduct and Behaviour Standards](#);
- [Complaints Policy](#) and [Complaints Procedures](#); and
- [Safe Mission Strategy](#).

as well as any applicable professional or ethical standards.

## 3. Commitment to Safe Mission

SU Australia recognises that championing a child-safe culture requires ongoing commitment at all levels of the organisation from the Board level, down.

SU Australia will:

1. Take preventative action by working within the requirements of the approved Safe Mission Strategy Framework. This will include an annually reviewed Safe Mission Strategy, supported by a communications strategy to communicate changes;
2. Work proactively to raise the level of child safety awareness in all areas of operation and implement/enhance policies and procedures to eliminate or mitigate risk;
3. Respond immediately and appropriately where concerns about the safety of Children and Young People arise;
4. Provide suitable processes to empower everyone including children and caregivers, to have a say in our efforts to enhance child-safe practices and procedures;
5. Foster a culture of transparency and 'no-blame' that supports all persons to safely disclose harm or risks of harm;
6. Respect diversity in cultures and child-rearing principles while keeping child safety as the overriding consideration;
7. Continuously seek to improve our recruitment screening practices to safeguard the selection of the most suitable people to work with children;
8. Report suspected harm, abuse, neglect, or mistreatment without delay to the appropriate authorities;
9. Comply with relevant legislation in all jurisdictions within which SU Australia operates;
10. Adhere to the Standards and applicable recommendations as detailed in the [Final Report – Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse](#) and later adopted by the Council of Australian Governments as the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#) (National Principles):

Principle 1	Child Safety and wellbeing is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture
Principle 2	Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
Principle 3	Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
Principle 4	Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
Principle 5	People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
Principle 6	Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused
Principle 7	Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training
Principle 8	Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
Principle 9	Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved
Principle 10	Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

11. Ensure that all the requirements of the 1 July 2022 [Victoria Child Safe Standards](#) are met. For example, Victoria sets an additional 'Standard' (11 Standards) which states the following: *Organisations will establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.*

Therefore, to ensure compliance, SU Australia will incorporate the [Victoria Child Safe Standards](#) and its success indicators as part of the Safe Mission Strategy implementation project.

## 4. Legislative Compliance

SU Australia acknowledges that there is a range of legislation in place across Australia to ensure the protection of children and young people. SU Australia undertakes to ensure that it maintains compliance with all relevant legislation in Australia, including individual State and Territory legislation as it applies to SU Australia's operations in those jurisdictions.

### 4.1 Child Protection Legislation

SU Australia acknowledges the extensive State and Territory Child Protection Legislation in place in Australia. SU Australia will ensure complete compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation in each State and Territory, including but not limited to the following legislation, and obligations outlined in Schedule 1 of this Policy:

- *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* (NSW);
- *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic);
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic);
- *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (Qld);
- *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016* (SA);
- *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004* (WA);
- *Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013* (Tas);
- *Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011* (ACT);
- *Care and Protection of Children Act 2007* (NT).

In summary, it is the responsibility of individual SU Australia Associated Persons, to ensure that they have the relevant working with children clearance or registration to legally perform child-related work in their relevant jurisdiction.

SU Australia will take all reasonable steps to ensure that prospective and ongoing SU Australia Associated Persons have the relevant clearance or registration to perform child-related work. SU Australia will obtain, and maintain a database of all employees and contractors engaging in child-related work to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that SU Australia maintains compliance with the relevant State and Territory legislation.

### 4.2 Human Rights

SU Australia is aware that the scope of its operations in Victoria, Queensland and the Australia Capital Territory is in some instances subject to the operation of the relevant human rights legislation in those jurisdictions as follows:

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic);
- *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld);
- *Human Rights Act 2004* (ACT).

In particular, SU Australia acknowledges the right of all children to be protected from harm, and to have their best interests protected and upheld. SU Australia undertakes to uphold the human rights of children and to ensure that all SU Australia operations that relate to children are carried out in a manner that protects their safety and wellbeing.

## **5. Accountabilities**

### **5.1 The SU Board of Australia** (Responding to Principles 1; 7; 9; 10)

The SU Board of Australia:

1. is responsible for ensuring that SU Australia conducts itself in a way that is suitable and appropriate for a charitable organisation, including ensuring compliance to the highest standard of all child protection, safety and welfare obligations;
2. is ultimately accountable for the preventing, and appropriate reporting of child abuse and other practices that are unsafe for the protection of Children and Young People that occurs within SU Australia;
3. will ensure that a risk register is maintained, which identifies risks and risk controls with respect to failing to protect Children and Young People and keep them safe;
4. must ensure that appropriate and effective internal Child Protection control systems are in place and are reviewed regularly; and
5. must ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place and that the [Conduct and Behaviour Standards](#) appropriately address Child Protection issues.

### **5.2 The Group Chief Executive Officer** (Responding to Principles 1; 5; 6; 7; 9; 10)

The Chief Executive Officer will:

1. direct and coordinate investigations into allegations of child abuse, and any necessary disciplinary actions in respect of adverse findings, against any SU Australia Associated Persons;
2. ensure that all SU Australia Associated Persons are aware of the relevant child protection policies and procedures, including obligations under the Code of Conduct and reporting child protection issues and suspected child abuse; and
3. report to the SU Board of Australia, and represent the organisation in relation to any child protection related issues or matters.

### **5.3 Group Manager Risk and Compliance** (Responding to Principles 1-10)

The Group Manager Risk and Compliance will:

1. ensure that annual reviews of SU Australia's child protection policies and procedures take place; and
2. will establish audit processes to monitor compliance with this policy, across all SU Australia operations. This includes ensuring compliance with ongoing child protection obligations under the relevant legislation and monitoring the relevant registrations or clearances for SU Australia Associated Persons.

### **5.4 SU Australia Managers** (Responding to Principles 2 - 10)

All SU Australia Managers will:

1. promote child safety as a critical priority for SU Australia;
2. assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and take reasonable steps to mitigate and manage all identified risks;
3. ensure that employees and volunteers are educated about the prevention and detection of harm to children;
4. implement and maintain a training program to increase child safety capability across the organisation;
5. provide support for SU Australia Associated Persons in undertaking their child protection responsibilities;
6. approve the safety and planning of all programs for which they are responsible; and
7. ensure that all inappropriate behaviour or suspected harm to children is reported according to relevant legislative requirements and SU Australia policies.

### **5.5 SU Australia Associated Persons** (Responding to Principles 2 - 8)

All SU Australia Associated Persons:

1. are responsible, within the bounds of their role within the organisation, for creating an environment that is supportive of the physical, emotional, and spiritual safety of all Children and Young People in their care;
2. share responsibility for the prevention and detection of harm to children;
3. must familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and SU Australia's policy and procedures in relation to Child Protection for their role within the organisation and comply with all relevant requirements; and
4. are responsible for reporting any reasonable belief (reasonable suspicion) that a child or young person's safety is at risk to their relevant SU Australia Manager for escalation to the appropriate authorities, or investigation.

## **6. Recruitment and Selection**

SU Australia undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all SU Australia Associated Persons. Our recruitment and screening processes aim to:

1. Promote and protect the safety of all Children and Young People under the care of SU Australia;
2. Identify safe and suitable people who share SU Australia's values and commitment to protecting Children and Young People;
3. Prevent a person from associating with SU Australia if they pose a risk to children or young people; and
4. Achieve and maintain compliance with the relevant legislative requirements by ensuring that all SU Australia Associated Persons hold the appropriate registration or clearance for their role under the relevant Child Protection Legislation.

## **7. Risk Management**

SU Australia will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach. Risk oversight, compliance, and controls are stipulated in the [Risk and Compliance Policy](#). Members of Risk Management committees will receive training in relation to child safety and the relevant obligations under Child Protection Legislation.

## **8. Reporting**

SU Australia always seeks to act in the best interests of Children and Young People. In planning all SU Australia ministries, we will perform an initial risk assessment (and subsequent regular risk assessments) to

identify and minimise all risks to a child or young person and take preventative and/or remedial action as necessary and without undue delay. If we become aware of a situation where actual or potential harm to a child or young person exists, we are required to immediately report this situation by following the required process as laid out in the Harm Reporting Policy.

If a child or young person has disclosed or appears likely to disclose a matter concerning potential or actual Harm to themselves or another child or young person, we should inform that person about the limits of confidentiality and how the information may be used. Wherever practicable this should occur prior to the disclosure. SU Australia however acknowledges that this may not always be possible.

## 9. References

- [Australian Human Rights Commission - National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)
- [Work Health & Safety Policy](#)
- [Conduct and Behaviour Standards](#)

## 10. Definitions

**Board Member** means a member of the SU Board of Australia.

**Children and Young People** means anyone under the age of 18.

**Child Protection Legislation** means:

1. [Child Protection \(Working with Children\) Act 2012 \(NSW\)](#)
2. [Worker Screening Act 2020 \(Vic\)](#)
3. [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#)
4. [Child Safety \(Prohibited Persons\) Act 2016 \(SA\)](#)
5. [Working with Children \(Criminal Record Checking\) Act 2004 \(WA\)](#)
6. [Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 \(Tas\)](#)
7. [Working with Vulnerable People \(Background Checking\) Act 2011 \(ACT\)](#)
8. [Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 \(NT\)](#)

**Code of Conduct** means the SU Australia [Conduct and Behaviour Standards](#), as published and amended from time to time.

**Harm** includes any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the person's physical, psychological or emotional well-being by any cause, other than confirmed accidental harm not involving negligence or misconduct. Harm to a child or other vulnerable person includes minor harm that is cumulative in nature that would result in a detrimental effect of a significant nature to the person if allowed to continue. Harm can be caused by, amongst other things: physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; sexual abuse or exploitation, including exposure to pornography; domestic or family violence; bullying; self-harm.

**Reasonable Belief (reasonable suspicion)** means a belief formed when a child or other vulnerable person, or someone close to them, discloses or signs or indicators are present. Proof is not required. SU Australia Associated Persons should ensure that they have formed a belief based on reasonable grounds and held in good faith.

**SU Australia** means Scripture Union Australia.

**SU Australia Associated Persons** means all SU Australia Board members, employees, volunteers, contractors, interns, consultants, and training students associated with SU Australia and who engage in services or activities related to children and other vulnerable people.

**SU Board of Australia** means the Board of Directors of SU Australia.

**SU Australia Managers** means any SU Australia employee or volunteer who is appointed in a leadership capacity with the responsibility to manage or oversee the activities of SU Australia Associated Persons. This includes any managerial role in the SU Australia structure (whether leading a team or specialist function), Camp or Event Directors, and all ministry Team Leaders.

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**Policy Revision History**

<i>Revision date:</i>	<i>Revision No:</i>	<i>Summary description of revision(s) made:</i>	<i>Section(s) changed:</i>	<i>Approved by:</i>
21 June 2022	1	Add the 1 July 2022 compliance requirement with Standard 1 of the Victoria Child Safe Standards	3.11	

# Schedule 1

Jurisdiction	Legislation	Scheme	Obligations
<p><b>New South Wales</b></p>	<p><a href="#"><u>Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012</u></a></p>	<p>Working With Children Check</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To engage in child-related work*, a person must either:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o hold a current working with children check clearance for the type of work being engaged in; or</li> <li>o have an application pending for a current working with children check clearance for the type of work being engaged in.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• SU Australia must not employ or engage or continue to employ or engage a person in child-related work* if:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o the worker does not have a current working with children clearance or an application for a working with children clearance; or</li> <li>o the worker is subject to an interim bar.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Before employing or engaging a worker in child-related work*, SU Australia must:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o record the worker's <b>relevant details</b>, being:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ full name;</li> <li>▪ date of birth;</li> <li>▪ working with children number, or working with children application number;</li> <li>▪ the expiry date for the worker's working with children clearance;</li> </ul> </li> <li>o verify the worker's relevant details against the working with children register; and</li> <li>o ensure that the worker's relevant details are updated no later than <b>5 days</b> after the expiry of the worker's working with children clearance; and</li> <li>o maintain a record of the worker's relevant details while that person works for SU Australia, and for 7 years after the worker's engagement or employment with SU Australia ceases.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Victoria</b></p>	<p><a href="#"><u>Worker Screening Act 2020</u></a></p>	<p>Working With Children Check</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To engage in child-related work*, a person must:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o hold a current working with children clearance; or</li> <li>o have a pending application for a working with children clearance, provided they have not previously been excluded from having a clearance or carrying out child related work.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• SU Australia must not employ or engage or continue to employ or engage a person in child-related work unless:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o the person has a current working with children check; or</li> <li>o the person has a pending application for a working with children clearance, provided they have not previously</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



			<p>been excluded from having a clearance or carrying out child related work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is an offence for SU Australia to knowingly, or recklessly, engage a person in child related work in circumstances where it is not permitted to do so.</li> <li>• Before employing or engaging a worker in child-related work*, SU Australia must ensure that the person has the necessary working with children clearances, to ensure the individual is suitable to engage in child related work.</li> </ul>
<b>Queensland</b>	<a href="#"><u>Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000</u></a>	Blue Card System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To engage in child-related work*, a person must either hold or have an application pending for a working with children clearance ("Blue Card").</li> <li>• SU Australia must not employ or engage or continue to employ or engage a person in child-related work* unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o the employee holds a working with children clearance; and</li> <li>o SU Australia notifies the chief executive that SU Australia has hired the person to engage in child related work.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• It is an offence for SU Australia to not comply with these requirements. Additionally, SU Australia must not knowingly, or in circumstances where it ought reasonably know, employ a person who a suspended working with children clearance.</li> <li>• Prior to employing a person to engage in child-related work, SU Australia must take reasonable steps to verify the person's identity by, for example, sighting photo identification.</li> <li>• SU Australia must develop and implement a written strategy yearly in accordance with requirements in section 171 of the Act, and Schedule 1 of the <i>Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020</i> (Qld).</li> </ul>
<b>Western Australia</b>	<a href="#"><u>Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004</u></a>	Working with Children Check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To engage in child-related work*, a person must either hold or have an application pending for a current assessment notice.</li> <li>• SU Australia must not employ or engage or continue to employ or engage a person in child-related work if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o SU Australia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ is aware that the worker has been convicted, or has a pending charge in relation to a Class 1 or Class 2 offence; and</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the person does not have a current assessment notice and has not made an application for an assessment notice that is pending; or</li> </ul> </li> <li>o SU Australia is aware that a negative notice or an interim negative notice has been made in relation to the person; or</li> <li>o the worker does not have a current assessment notice, and has not made an application for an assessment notice that is pending; or</li> <li>o SU Australia is aware that the person has withdrawn an application for an assessment notice; or</li> <li>o if the person has been employed by SU Australia for more than 5 days in the calendar year, and the worker does not have a current, or pending assessment notice.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before employing or engaging a worker* in child-related work*, SU Australia must carry out the necessary checks to ensure that the person can be employed in child-related work, to comply with its obligations under the legislation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>South Australia</b></p>	<p><a href="#"><u>Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016</u></a></p>	<p>Child-Related Employment Screening</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To engage in child-related work*, a person must either hold or have an application pending for a current working with children clearance.</li> <li>• SU Australia must not employ or engage or continue to employ or engage a person in child-related work unless a working with children check has been conducted in relation to the worker within the preceding 5 years. SU Australia has an ongoing obligation to ensure that these checks happen every 5 years for its employees.</li> <li>• Before employing or engaging a worker* in child-related work*, SU Australia must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o obtain the worker's relevant details, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ full name;</li> <li>▪ address;</li> <li>▪ date of birth; and</li> <li>▪ unique identified;</li> </ul> </li> <li>o verify that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a working with children check has been conducted in relation to the person in the preceding 5 years; and</li> <li>▪ the worker is not prohibited from working with children; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>o provide the central assessment unit with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the worker's relevant details; and</li> <li>▪ the name and contact details of the person at SU Australia who has verified that the worker</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

			<p>has a working with children check, and is not prohibited from working with children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SU Australia must notify the central assessment unit if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ SU Australia becomes aware of assessable information<sup>1</sup> in relation to a worker;</li> <li>○ SU Australia becomes aware that the worker is prohibited from working with children under a law of the Commonwealth or any State or Territory;</li> <li>○ SU Australia becomes aware the person is or becomes registrable under the <i>Child Sex Offenders Registration Act 2006</i> (SA) or the worker makes a disclosure to SU Australia under that Act.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Tasmania</b>	<a href="#">Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013</a>	Working with Children Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To engage in child-related work*, a person must either hold or have an application pending for a current registration to engage in the work.</li> <li>• SU Australia must not employ or engage or continue to employ or engage a person in child-related work* if the worker does not have the appropriate current registration for the type of work being engaged in. It is an offence for SU Australia to engage an unregistered worker to engage in child-related work.</li> <li>• SU Australia must not engage a person registered with a volunteer class registration in paid employment.</li> <li>• SU Australia must notify the Registrar within 10 business days, in writing, of changes to a registered worker's employment or engagement with SU Australia. It is an offence to fail to do this.</li> <li>• When employing or engaging a new worker* in child-related work*, SU Australia may notify the Registrar that a new person has been engaged for this work.</li> </ul>
<b>Northern Territory</b>	<a href="#">Care and Protection of Children Act 2007</a>	Working with Children Check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To engage in child-related work*, a person must either hold or have an application pending for a: clearance notice,.</li> <li>• SU Australia must not employ or engage or continue to employ or engage a person in child-related work* unless <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the person has a current clearance notice; or</li> <li>○ has applied for a clearance notice, and this application has not yet been decided.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• It is an offence for SU Australia to employ or engage a worker in child-related work, other than as permitted above.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> As defined in section 8 of the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016*.

<p><b>Australian Capital Territory</b></p>	<p><a href="#"><u>Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011</u></a></p>	<p>Working with Vulnerable People Registration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To engage in child-related work*, a person must hold a current registration to engage in that work.</li> <li>• SU Australia must not employ or engage or continue to employ or engage a person in child-related work if the worker does not have the appropriate current registration for the type of work being engaged in. It is an offence for SU Australia to employ an unregistered worker in child-related work, regardless of whether this is done knowingly or recklessly.</li> <li>• Before employing or engaging a worker* in child-related work*, SU Australia must take reasonable steps to satisfy itself that the prospective worker has the appropriate registration.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Child-related work*</i> is work that involves or may potentially involve contact with children in connection with provision of such services for children as counselling, overnight camps, entertainment, education, child care, sports activities, religious and other services.</p>			