



National Child Safety Standards

Purpose

St John Ambulance Australia Inc. (St John) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people (children) and has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse.

St John recognises that it has a responsibility for ensuring that a safe and supportive environment for children engaged with St John services, activities or programs. Our members should always respect and foster the dignity and self-esteem of children and empower them to speak out when they are worried or feel unsafe. In turn, St John aims to foster a culture where all employees, volunteers and contractors can raise concerns about child safety.

As an organisation working with children, St John:

- recognises that children have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, free from emotional and physical danger, abuse, neglect and exploitation regardless of special needs, age, gender, religion or beliefs, cultural or socioeconomic status
- recognises that children may encounter difficulty in accessing or receiving appropriate, fair and equitable services
- places the highest priority on its responsibility to ensure that the children, for whom it has a duty of care, are protected against people and events which may cause them harm, and
- respects the values, culture and heritage of Aboriginal people and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- acknowledges that it has a role in fostering a safe environment and in contributing towards the safety and protection of children engaged in St John services, programs or activities.

It is essential to note that engagement in 'work with children' is not limited to St John's Youth Program and includes (but is not limited to) activities in any of the following service areas or programs:

- Event Health Services
- Ambulance
- First Aid in Schools
- Community Care initiatives and programs
- kit re-stocking
- training (volunteer and commercial).

St John Ambulance Australia's *Child Safety Rules, Standards and Guidelines* are intended to cover all service areas, programs and activities of St John in Australia that engage or provide services to children, regardless of the service area they are engaged.

Definitions

Adult Member—any person engaged as a member of a St John entity in Australia, whether a paid employee or volunteer, who is eighteen (18) years of age or older.

Children or child—includes persons under the age of eighteen (18) years who are involved in the activities or programs of, or who are receiving services from, any St John Ambulance Australia entity. A child may or may not be a St John member.

Entity—means all St John entities, including state and territory organisations and the national organisation.

Junior Member—any child aged 8-11 years engaged in the St John Junior Program.

Personal safety education—education delivered to children who are members of St John including, but not limited to, the modules from the St John Personal Safety Toolkit and Personal Safety Interest or Proficiency Courses.

Youth Member—includes any child aged 12-17 years engaged as a member in the St John Youth Program.

Rules

Child safety legislation as applies to each state or territory.

Standards

1. All adult Members are required to follow the National Child Safety Rules, Standards and Guidelines (Rules, Standards and Guidelines). All entities will develop mechanisms for making their Members aware of the Rules, Standards and Guidelines.
2. All adult Members must complete child safety awareness training annually. This includes young Members turning 18 years of age. Completion must occur **prior to** any adult Member commencing work with or around children.
3. All St John child safety training must be reviewed annually with a view to incorporating changes to legislation, addressing emerging trends in child safety and/or changes to organisational practices.
4. Any manager in a youth division must complete the unit of competency *Identify and Respond to Children and Young People at Risk* (CHCPRT001) or successor, prior to appointment.
5. Each entity will select and train suitable members to be appointed as Child Safety Officers. Child Safety Officers must complete the unit of competency *Identify and Respond to Children and Young People at Risk* (CHCPRT001) or successor prior to appointment. Child Safety Officers will be able to recognise all forms of abuse and neglect, know the correct procedure for reporting to authorities in their state or territory, and be able to provide support and assistance to members dealing with matters of child abuse.
6. All Members under 18 years of age will receive annual personal safety education.
7. Criminal history screening and working with children checks (as per the relevant state/territory legislative framework) will be undertaken for all prospective adult Members, including Members when they turn 18 years of age during their membership (or other age as stipulated by state/territory legislation), **prior to** appointment. A clear result for the working with children check must be obtained prior to commencing work with or around children.
8. Re-screening for criminal history and working with children checks will occur in line with the time-frame stipulated by state/territory legislation. A clear result for the working with children check must be obtained for members to continue work with or around children. A Member without a current valid result for the working with children check must be excluded from work with or around children.
9. Each entity will develop and enforce procedures for non-compliance with child safety screening and training requirements. The procedures must state the consequences of requirements not being met.
10. Each entity will develop and implement child safety policy and procedures:
 - a. framed around the safety of children
 - b. prescribing the mandatory screening requirements for Members and prospective Members. This must include provision for international criminal history screening where a prospective Member has lived internationally for more than 6 months in the last 10 years as well as the development of a register of members Working with Children Check (WCC) to ensure currency and detailing procedures should WCCs expire
 - c. prescribing the responsive and timely management of all incidents, allegations and reporting of matters concerning the safety of children accessing St John services, programs or activities
 - d. detailing a clear reporting procedure, including stating the entity's internal and external reporting obligations
 - e. detailing the process for both internal and external investigations of child safety-related matters
 - f. prescribing the annual review of all child safety policies and procedures and provision for review occurring sooner following any incident or near-miss occurring within the entity or following changes to relevant state/territory legislation or government guidelines.
11. All entities will develop a policy regarding the management of allegations of historic abuse.
12. Each entity will develop, and make accessible, child safety codes of conduct for all service areas that engage or provide services, programs or activities to children including (but not limited to) Event Health Services, Ambulance, Youth Program, First Aid in Schools Program and Community Care programs (as applicable to each entity).

13. All entities will disseminate and make accessible information about organisational child safety policies (e.g. codes of conduct, statement of commitment, reporting procedures and complaints forms) to children, their families, Members and the public.
14. Key child safety policy materials, including reporting and complaints processes, will appear on each entity's website.
15. Each entity will obtain accreditation with a reputable child safety organisation or practitioner regarding compliance with the Child Safe Principles identified by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Accountability

Chief Executive Officer of each St John entity.

Failure to comply with these Standards may be considered a breach of licensing agreement.

Guidelines

Child Safety Guidelines.

Child Safety Guidelines

A. AIM

1. The National Child Safety Guidelines ('Guidelines') aim to enable members of St John to carry out their responsibilities in ensuring safe environments for children engaging in St John services, programs and activities, for whom St John has a duty of care.

B. PRINCIPLES

2. Children have the right to be:
 - free from emotional and physical danger, exploitation, abuse and neglect and feel safe in the activities and services that they access
 - listened to and heard
 - valued and treated as individuals
 - involved in decisions (where appropriate)
 - respected for their individuality, difference and identity.

C. PREVENTATIVE SUPERVISORY PRACTICES

3. All St John Members must take all reasonable measures to avoid potentially risky situations or opportunities for allegations or misunderstandings to occur. Such situations can, for example, occur in training or the administration of first aid, working in the St John Youth Program or attending a division where Members under the age of 18 years are present. There needs to be a balance between protecting children and safeguarding the reputation of the Member.
4. It is recognised that Members providing services as caregivers of persons with disabilities may be unable to meet aspects of St John's codes of conduct or these guidelines, by the very nature of this work. In these situations, Members must be selected with particular care and their interaction with clients or Members regularly reviewed by supervisors in a risk management framework.
5. Billeting of children in St John will not be practiced. It is St John's position that this practice could pose significant risk to the safety and wellbeing of children.
6. Practices to be **avoided** include:
 - (a) being in one-to-one situations with a child in an enclosed space. Where such a situation is unavoidable, it is recommended that preventative practices be adopted (see 7 below)
 - (b) transporting a child in a one-to-one situation. Where this is necessary, Members should always ensure they tell someone of their intentions (i.e. the child's parent or carer, a supervisor or manager)
 - (c) running a division that involves Youth Members single-handedly. Members responsible for running a division should always ensure an appropriate balance of male and female adult leaders or helpers
 - (d) showing favouritism or singling out children
 - (e) using inappropriate language and subject matter
 - (f) using harmful techniques in managing the behaviour of children including (but not limited to):
 - (i) dismissing or trivialising
 - (ii) using bullying behaviour to manage children or maintain discipline
 - (iii) verbal abuse, derogatory remarks or intimidation
 - (iv) corporal punishment
 - (v) use of excessive force (except in circumstances where doing so would protect the child or others from harm)
 - (h) participating in any conduct that would constitute 'grooming' (the practice of building an emotional connection with a child to gain their, or their family members, trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, exploitation or trafficking. Grooming can occur face-to-face or in an online environment)
 - (i) on-going familiarity with any one child. Such behaviour on the part of an adult Member is questionable and requires immediate intervention and restraint. It is important that Members understand the difference between 'friendliness' and 'familiarity'

- (i) on-going familiarity by a child toward an adult Member. Such behaviour is cause for concern and should be discouraged by the adult concerned
- (j) taking a child to a Member's home
- (k) doing things for a child of a personal nature that the child can do for themselves
- (l) engaging in sexually suggestive behaviour within a child's sight or hearing
- (m) sharing or giving anything to a child that may be construed as pornographic
- (n) allowing inappropriate or offensive language by a child to go unchallenged
- (o) allowing bullying behaviour by another Member to go unchecked
- (p) unnecessary or inappropriate touching
- (q) entering into a sexual relationship with a child, to whom you are in a position of trust, even if they have given their consent
- (r) letting any allegation or suspicion of harm go unrecorded or unreported.

7. Practices to be **adopted** include:

- (a) ensuring that a teacher is present within a reasonable distance when working in a school environment
- (b) being aware of children's' sensitivities during first aid practical work, including:
 - (i) giving prior notice so that children can wear suitable clothing
 - (ii) avoiding touching the child where possible—demonstrate on a colleague with their pre-arranged permission or ask an experienced participant to demonstrate with a peer, preferably of the same sex
- (c) ensuring, for example, in first aid training where physical contact is unavoidable, that:
 - (i) another adult is present
 - (ii) the child's consent is gained
 - (iii) private areas (such as the breast, buttocks and groin) are never touched
- (d) where a child is upset and in need of comfort, seeking ways to provide comfort and support without unnecessary physical contact
- (e) giving thought to the arrival and departure of children at St John events, including:
 - (i) being present before children arrive
 - (ii) ensuring that all children have been collected before leaving the premises
 - (iii) seeking parental/carer permission should it be necessary to walk or drive a child home
- (f) involving children in establishing their own list of group rules or understandings, including outlining what is and what is not acceptable conduct
- (g) ensuring Members conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their position, as a positive role model and in line with the St John Code of Conduct, Child Safety Code of Conduct and child safety policies and procedures
- (h) ensuring, during camps or residential events, that a minimum of two supervisors (one male and one female if a mixed group) are on duty at all times. Supervisors will only go to children's sleeping quarters when accompanied by another responsible adult
- (i) cautioning Members engaging in 'at risk' situations or behaviours, or acting outside St John's Codes of Conduct or child safety policies and procedures
- (j) encouraging children to question things they don't understand, without fear of repercussions
- (k) encourage children to 'NO, GO, TELL' in situations where they feel unsafe, worried or uncomfortable (see Appendix 1)
- (l) ensuring that disciplinary methods are fair, consistent and unlikely to give rise to complaints of harassment or allegations of misuse of power/authority. It is recommended that responses to misbehaviour:
 - (i) address why the behaviour was unacceptable
 - (ii) stipulate the consequences of the unwanted behaviour, and

- (iii) provide options for better behavioural choices in the future
- (m) asking a child about their welfare. This is part of keeping children safe. It is important to:
 - (i) ensure you do not probe or question too deeply
 - (ii) minimise the need for the child to re-tell the details of any reported abuse. Re-telling may cause further psychological harm
 - (iii) use language the child understands
- (n) where being in a one-to-one situation with a child in an enclosed space is unavoidable, ensure that a door is kept open and another adult is close by
- (o) advising someone (e.g. Child Safety Officer) where a Member:
 - is concerned that a relationship is developing that may be an abuse of trust
 - is concerned that a child is becoming attracted to a Member who supervises or works with a child
 - believes a child has misunderstood or misinterpreted something they have said or done
 - has been required to physically restrain a child to prevent them from harming themselves or others
 - suspects abuse or harm (e.g. a child tells a Member they are being abused or harmed, or a third party makes a report to a Member, or an abuse has been witnessed).

D. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

8. All entities will develop a statement of commitment to child safety.
9. All organisational policies and procedures relating to child safety will include a statement of commitment to:
 - a. child safety
 - b. fostering a culture where all Members feel able to raise concerns about child safety, and that reporting is supported and encouraged, and
 - c. equity and diversity.
10. All entities will develop a complaint handling policy that identifies procedures for handling a range of child safety-based complaints.
11. The concerns, complaints and feedback of children, their families, adult Members and the public will be sought after by entities, and mechanisms are designed to ensure accessibility to complaints processes (including provision for anonymity).
12. Each entity will develop a policy around supervision of adult Members working with children.
13. Each entity will develop social media guidelines that include provisions for social media interactions with children.

E. EDUCATING CHILDREN

14. Education children about keeping safe is considered the primary means of promoting child safe environments.
15. St John has a responsibility to teach protective behaviours to children. The St John Personal Safety Toolkit, amongst a range of other resources, have been developed for this purpose. The aim of any personal safety education program should be for children to:
 - (a) recognise situations that may result in harm
 - (b) be able to assert the right to resist an offender
 - (c) set up a network of trusted adults
 - (d) feel confident that an adult will take action to prevent further abuse.
16. Without creating undue fear or alarm, children should be made aware:
 - (a) of potential dangers and how to avoid them
 - (b) that, if in trouble, they can seek assistance from a trusted adult

- (c) safe and unsafe touching, including body signals that indicate the child is feeling worried, uncomfortable or scared
- (d) that they should not have to accept behaviours by others that makes them feel uncomfortable
- (e) the difference between good and bad secrets
- (f) that adults will listen to them and believe them if they reveal a secret
- (g) of their right to 'NO, GO, TELL' if someone (even someone they know well) tries to touch them in a way that frightens, confuses or makes them feel uncomfortable (see Appendix 1).

F. EMPOWERING CHILDREN

17. Children and youth stakeholders (e.g. leaders, parents or carers) ideas and opinions will be sought after in the development and/or review of child safety policy materials, organisational strategy and change.

G. UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

18. Through comprehensive training, St John adult Members will be made aware of:
- the forms and indicators of abuse
 - the impact of abuse
 - sexually harmful behaviour in children
 - how to respond to disclosures
 - how to report abuse including reporting obligations.
19. Where an adult Member has not participated in child safety training within a stipulated period, their membership will be suspended until this requirement has been completed. Where refusal to participate in training is ongoing, counselling and disciplinary proceedings should be imposed.

H. MANDATORY REPORTING

20. Regardless of whether a Member is a mandatory reporter in their paid (or other voluntary) profession as per any legislative framework, all adult Members are considered to be mandatory reporters in St John.

I. RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE/NEGLECT

21. St John Members will respond to all reports made regarding allegations, disclosures or suspicions of child abuse.
22. Where there is the possibility that a criminal offense has occurred, St John Members will refer the matter to Police, or the relevant child safety authority in the jurisdiction in which the alleged offence occurred, regardless of any other considerations.
23. Members, through training, will familiarise themselves with methods of responding appropriately to a disclosure, allegation or suspicion of abuse.
24. Members will be made aware through training that responding inappropriately may cause further psychological harm to the child.
25. Where a disclosure has been made, Members will be trained to understand the importance of not pressuring the child for additional information or asking intrusive questions.
26. Members will be made aware they must not approach the alleged offender.
27. St John will take appropriate action regarding the tenure of any Member who has allegedly committed an offence relating to children while any internal enquiries or external investigation occurs, e.g. suspension.
28. Members will be made aware that in conducting any internal enquiries, nothing will be done by St John that may interfere or jeopardise any police (or other legislated authority) investigation. St John will seek advice from police or other authorities regarding any proposed course of action to ensure that any action(s) St John takes will not jeopardise or interfere with an investigation.
29. Members will be made aware that it is not the role of Members to investigate allegations of abuse. Investigation is the role of either the police or the relevant state or territory child safety

authority. Members will be made aware that conducting an investigation can jeopardise any formal investigation.

30. Members will maintain confidentiality, telling only those persons or agencies that have a compelling need to know (i.e. the Child Safety Officer, state or territory CEO [when the allegation is against a member], state or territory child safety authority or the police).
31. Members are required to document all suspicions or allegations of child abuse accurately and factually, and in line with their state or territory procedures.

J. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PRACTICES

32. Each entity will develop a recruitment and selection policy and procedures that include provision for the following:
 - a. the featuring of feature the entity's statement of commitment to child safety in all job advertisements, position descriptions, key selection criteria, workplace contracts and web pages
 - b. that child safety is a key responsibility in all position descriptions and contracts, regardless of role or service area
 - c. that all new employees and volunteers, regardless of service area, will read, sign and date the entity's statement of commitment to child safety, child safety code(s) of conduct and all child safety policy and procedures upon engagement
 - d. that all employees and volunteers will re-sign the entity's statement of commitment to child safety, child safety code(s) of conduct and all child safety policy and procedures annually during performance appraisal processes
 - e. potential candidates for roles within St John (whether paid or volunteer), including the promotion of existing members, are subject to professional reference checks prior to appointment.

K. MEMBER RESPONSE TO ABUSIVE OR VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

33. Where a child is abusive or violent towards another Member or Member(s) of the public, Members will:
 - call **Triple Zero (000)** in an emergency
 - ensure the safety of all involved, including themselves and any children. This might involve removing themselves from the situation where practicable or calling **Triple Zero (000)** for assistance
 - seek assistance from other adults
 - avoid restraining a child where possible (although circumstances may arise where this is the only option to prevent the child from harming themselves or others)
 - seek appropriate first aid or medical attention for anyone injured
 - provide opportunity for the child to reflect on the incident once the child is calm (where appropriate)
 - report the incident to a supervisor or the Child Safety Officer
 - undertake appropriate de-briefing with all involved, as appropriate
 - inform parents or carers of the incident
 - document the incident in line with incident reporting procedures.

L. TRANSITION OF YOUTH MEMBERS TO ADULT MEMBERSHIP

34. Each entity that engages children as Members will develop a transition strategy for Youth Members (15-17 years) ageing into adulthood around the expectations and requirements that St John has of adult Members regarding child safety.

M. RISK MANAGEMENT

35. Each entity will develop and implement a centralised risk management strategy to address the ways in which St John identifies, mitigates and responds to working with children across all relevant service, program and activity areas. The strategy must include:
 - a. the engagement of staff and volunteers across all service areas in the risk management process to ensure a broad understanding of risk across the organisation is generated

- b. processes for ensuring that management are made aware of all risks to child safety.
36. Each entity will implement incident review pathways following any claim, allegation or report made regarding child safety, with a view to ensuring that organisational policies and procedures are addressing key risk areas.
- N. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
37. Each entity will establish a centralised register for all child safety related complaints. This register should include:
- a. date and time of the complaint
 - b. name of the complainant(s)
 - c. other parties to the complaint
 - d. service area the complaint relates to
 - e. responsible manager
 - f. details of the complaint
 - g. internal actions taken
 - h. external actions taken
 - i. policy implications identified
 - j. reference to the date, version and/or year of all relevant policies and procedures corresponding to the complaint (so that they may be easily produced if required by legal process).
38. A clear process for the storage of the information reflected in clause 37 is reflected in policy and procedures.
39. Records relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse, must only be destroyed in accordance with records disposal schedules or published institutional policies. Records relevant to child sexual abuse should be subject to minimum retention periods that allow for delayed disclosure of abuse by victims and take account of limitation periods for civil actions for child sexual abuse. Records that pertain to minors (children under the age of 18 years) must be held for 100 years.
- O. OBTAINING CONSENT
40. When working with children, it is important that valid consent is always obtained for participation in St John activities, programs and services. Consent might be, for example, from parents or carers for a child to take part in a specified St John activity, or consent given expressly from child for a member to provide first aid treatment. Consent may also be signalled by a person's conduct. For example, where a person turns up to participate in an event voluntarily or a child tells a leader it is ok to demonstrate a first aid practice on their person in a lesson.
41. Regardless of the method of obtaining consent, it is important that Members ensure the consent given is *valid*. To determine if consent given is valid, Members must consider:
- whether the individual providing consent has the capacity to give that consent (e.g. that person can understand and weigh up the information needed to make the decision)
 - sufficient information has been provided to the individual to base their decision on, and the information is provided in an appropriate way
 - the consent is given voluntarily and is free from coercion or repercussions.
42. Where a Member is concerned that consent given is not valid, it is important to seek the advice of a supervisor or the Child Safety Officer.

Glossary of Terms

Adult Member refers to both voluntary and paid staff 18 years of age and over.

Allegation is an assertion made, yet to be proved in legal proceedings.

Billeting refers to the practice of lodging a child in a private home.

Child includes *all* people under the age of eighteen who are involved in the activities of St John or are receiving services from St John.

Child abuse is an act or omission that endangers a child's physical or emotional health or development.

Child Safety Awareness Training refers to the completion of the national eLearning course 'Child Safety Awareness Training' plus a face-to-face component.

Criminal history screening is a process where a report is obtained from the Police or other prescribed source detailing the criminal history of a person for the purposes of determining whether that person is suitable to work with children.

Exploitation is "the use or manipulation of another person for one's own advantage" (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/exploitation>).

Indicator of abuse refers to physical and/or behavioural signs in a child that may potentially provide evidence that abuse is/has been occurring.

Member refers to both voluntary and paid staff of St John Ambulance Australia entities.



St John *Preventative practices* describes any action that is designed to prevent or minimise the likelihood of harm occurring to children. For example, keeping the door open when in an enclosed space with a child, or ensuring another adult is close by.

Protective behaviours are skills designed to enable children to develop workable strategies to better help them deal with problems or difficult situations.

Unit of competency refers to achieving the qualification *Identify and Respond to Children and Young People at Risk* (CHCPRT001). To achieve this qualification, members are required to complete the requirements of the eLearning course 'Child Safety Awareness Training' (see above) plus subsequent learning via workbook modality (or equivalent qualification).

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NO, GO, TELL Response Framework

Children need to be empowered to respond assertively in unsafe situations. The *NO, GO, TELL Response Framework* helps children to do this:

- No—Say 'No' or words that mean 'no', if you can
- Go—leave the unsafe situation
- Tell—get help from a trusted adult.