

SUNEDEN SPECIALIST SCHOOL
CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS POLICY



Suneden acknowledges that every child and young person has the right to be safe from harm and risk of harm at all times.

Suneden is committed to the safety of children and young people and to maintaining a child safe environment, and will ensure:

- That child protection is of paramount consideration.
- That children and young people are valued, respected and encouraged to participate and that the safety and protection of children and young people is always the first priority.

Suneden Specialist School complies with the [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017](#), the [Child Safety \(Prohibited Persons\) Act 2016](#), and the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#).

This policy describes Suneden's Child Safe Environment Practices, with more detailed information available in relevant policies.

Child Safe Organisations: The National Principles

The [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#) provide a nationally consistent approach to creating organisational cultures that foster child safety and wellbeing. These principles underpin the work at Suneden helping to ensure that the school takes a proactive and preventative stance on child protection issues and ensures that the safety of all students is a paramount consideration when developing activities, policies and management practices.

The National Principles are:

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

Scope of Policy

Maintaining a child safe environment is the responsibility of the School Board, the Principals, and of all staff and volunteers.

The School Board has the overarching responsibility for maintaining a child safe environment. The Principals are responsible for promoting a strong child protection culture; ensuring child protection is included regularly in staff training; ensuring child protection is included in the school's curriculum; ensuring that staff and volunteers have up to date Working with children Check (WWCC) and Responding to Reports of Harm and Neglect- Education and Care (RRHAN-EC) training and that third parties have up to date WWCC; supporting staff when a mandatory report is made; and ensuring students and staff receive support if involved in a harm or risk of harm situation.

All staff at Suneden are responsible for reporting any suspected harm or risk of harm to the Child Abuse Report Line, advising the Principal when a report has been made, and taking action when children or young people have disclosed information about inappropriate behaviour of adults.

Policy Communication

Suneden's Child Safe Environments Policy will be available to families through the parent portal on the school's website, it will be provided to new students and their families upon enrolment, and will also be provided to new staff at commencement of employment. The policy is available to existing staff on the School's intranet.

Participation of families, children and young people.

Suneden is committed to working collaboratively with students and their families and in providing students and their families with opportunities to voice concerns, provide feedback and participate in decision making on issues related to their child and their child's schooling.

- The Student Representative Council (SRC) at Suneden provides students with the opportunity to provide feedback, raise concerns, contribute to the development of whole school initiatives and be involved in decision making at the school.
- Individual Education Plans (IEP). Many of our students, due to the nature of their disability, are reliant on their parents/families to be their voice and to advocate for their needs and supports, however wherever possible students are encouraged to participate in goal setting for their IEPs at the beginning of each year in a meeting together with the class teacher and their parents.
- Our *Keeping Safe at Suneden* protective behaviours curriculum teaches students the skills and knowledge to be able to recognise harm or risk of harm, to understand appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, to maintain positive relationships, and to keep themselves and others safe. The program is tailored to the age and ability of the students and explicitly teaches students about issues including Feelings and Emotions, Identifying Hazards, Public/Private Places, Behaviour and Body Parts, Puberty, Personal Space, Relationships, Safe/Unsafe Touch, Safety Networks, Early Warning Signs, Learning to Seek Assistance, Assertiveness/Saying No/Consent, and Sex Education. Families are informed, consulted and encouraged to participate in the learning of this protective behaviours curriculum.
- Surveys - Families are given opportunities to provide feedback on school initiatives and programs through online surveys and feedback forms. They are also encouraged to share their feedback directly to the Principal either in person, via phone or via email.

Code of Conduct

Suneden has a 'Staff Code of Conduct' policy. The policy sets out the expectations and standards of conduct required from the staff, professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and unacceptable behaviour when working and interacting with children and young people. This is based on information outlined in the [Protective Practices for Staff in their Interactions with Children and Young People Guidelines](#). The Staff Code of Conduct outlines how best to support students and how to avoid or manage difficult situations. The policy also outlines how to report a breach of the code; and the consequences for breaching the code of conduct. Disciplinary action will depend on the nature and severity of the breach and can range from a caution to dismissal and police involvement.

Any allegations of sexual misconduct will follow the guidelines as set out in the document [Managing Allegations of Sexual Misconduct in SA Education and Care Settings](#).

The policy applies to all Suneden employees and volunteers. It is provided to all new staff upon commencement of employment, and available for staff to access through the school's intranet.

Recruitment

Suneden has a robust *Employment Screening and Suitability Policy* to ensure that all staff and volunteers at the school are suitable for working with students at Suneden. The monitoring of an individual's suitability to be employed at Suneden is continuous. It is established prior to commencing any work at the school, and is monitored throughout an employee's engagement.

Suneden will verify that all new employees or volunteers have a current, Not Prohibited Working with Children Check (WWCC) prior to commencing employment, and that all existing employees renew their WWCC every 5 years and their status remains as not prohibited. Verification will be done online through the DHS Screening Unit.

Suneden will advise the DHS Screening unit if it becomes aware of any information such as serious criminal offences, child protection information, or misconduct relating to one of its employees or volunteers.

All potential employees and volunteers will undertake face to face interviews, and will have at least two referee checks as part of their screening process.

Supervision, training and support for employees and volunteers

All staff at Suneden will complete the full day training "Safe Environments: Through their Eyes" and the "Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse & Neglect- Education and Care" online training module. These will be completed every 3 years or more often if needed. This is a condition of employment for all staff, and for teachers, forms part of the conditions of their teacher registration.

Student wellbeing and child protection are a standing item on the staff meeting agenda.

All staff have access to individual and whole school professional development opportunities throughout the year to ensure they have up to date knowledge and skills in keeping students safe.

Staff inductions, staff supervision (including classroom observations), staff performance appraisals, and staff performance development plans are also in place to ensure staff are supported in their role in maintaining a child safe environment.

Reporting and responding to harm or risk of harm

All staff at Suneden working directly with students are considered mandated notifiers and have a legal obligation to report a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm. All serious concerns of suspected harm or risk of harm must be reported via the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) by phoning 131478. Non serious concerns can be reported via eCARL, which is the online child protection reporting system.

Mandated notifiers at Suneden include the Principals, teachers, SSOs, bus drivers, Allied Health staff, administration staff and volunteers. It also includes those in a management position such as members of the School Board.

The *Suneden Student Protection Policy* outlines the responsibilities of mandated notifiers, how to make a notification, and how to support students, staff and their families once a report has been made.

Reporting and responding to general complaints or feedback

Suneden is committed to providing a clear and responsive complaints process in order to assist families and students to make a complaint when they are dissatisfied with the quality of educational services provided by the school, the behaviour and decisions of staff, or a policy, procedure or practice. This information is detailed in the *Suneden Parent Concerns and Complaints Policy* and is available to families through the parent portal on the Suneden website.

Risk Management

To help maintain a safe environment for children and young people, Suneden will review its risks regularly and implement strategies to minimise and manage these risks.

Related Policies and Procedures

Suneden has a number of policies and procedures in place to establish and maintain a child safe organisation. These policies are referenced within this policy.

Suneden Employment Screening and Suitability Policy

Suneden Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Suneden Student Protection Policy

Suneden Information Technology Policy

Suneden Parent Concerns and Complaints Policy

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed and updated every 5 years as required by the [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017](#). The policy may be reviewed more often if needed, for example where new risks are identified, where a critical incident requires change to the policy and procedures, or due to legislative requirements.

A new child safe environments compliance statement will be lodged each time this policy is reviewed.

Definitions

Child or young person – in the context of Suneden, this refers to all students enrolled at the school from 5-21 years of age.

Complainant – person who makes a complaint.

Harm - Section 17 of the Safety Act defines 'harm' to mean physical or psychological harm (whether caused by an act or omission), including harm caused by sexual, physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect.

Working with Children Check - People working or volunteering with children in South Australia must, by law, have a valid, not prohibited Working with Children Check. A Working with Children Check is an assessment

of whether a person poses an unacceptable risk to children. As part of the process, the Screening Unit will look at criminal history, child protection information and other information.

Associated Documents:

Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017

Child Safety (prohibited Persons) Act 2016

Children and Young People (Safety) Regulations 2017

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Australian Human Rights Commission 2018