

## CHILD AND YOUTH RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY POLICY

### Related Quality Frameworks and Legislation:

Aged Care Quality Standards (ACQS)	Standard 8: Organisational Governance
NDIS Quality Standards (NDIS)	Standard 2: Governance and Operational Management
Legislation	<a href="http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au">http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au</a> Child Protection Act 1999 Adoption Act 2009

### 1. Purpose

The Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy of Gladstone Community Linking Agency (GCLA) guides all paid and unpaid staff on the behavior expected when working with children and young people. GCLA focus on how to promote children and young people's safe participation in all services in an environment free from harm in accordance with relevant legislation.

To assist children and young people thrive, every organisation needs to understand their role in keeping children safe and preventing child abuse and neglect. We respect and value the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of every child and young person based on our value: *We embrace each other's humanity.*

GCLA is committed to the absolute right of all children and young people to be protected from harm caused by physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect and abides by the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) which enshrines the entitlement of all children, regardless of gender, religion, nationality or ability, to be protected from abuse, to have their opinions heard about matters that affect them, to receive and share information, to be treated with dignity and that the best interests of the child is always prioritised.

### 2. Scope

This Policy applies to paid and unpaid staff, contractors, stakeholders and customers of GCLA.

All paid and unpaid staff of GCLA have the responsibility to understand and apply risk management strategies designed to protect children from harm.

### 3. Policy Detail

This Child and Youth Risk Management Policy has been developed in compliance with the obligations under Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000, Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011 and the Child Protection Act 1999 to promote and protect children and young people.

To comply with the legislative framework, GCLA Child and Youth Risk Management strategies:

- address GCLA's commitment to creating a safe and supportive service environment within our organisation;
- strengthen GCLA's capability to provide such an environment;
- assist GCLA to manage any concerns with respect to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who are involved with the organisation;
- promote consistency of GCLA's approach to risk management within the organisation and with respect to its compliance with the requirements under the Act.

Harm or neglect of any child is unacceptable. It is the right of all children under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to be protected from being hurt or mistreated, in body or mind. GCLA recognises that child maltreatment has long-lasting negative effects on children and adult survivors including mental and physical health problems; diminished social functioning; and decreased life expectancy (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014).

### **Statement of Commitment**

Gladstone Community Linking Agency (GCLA) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. GCLA respects and values the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of every child and young person based on our value: *We embrace each other's humanity.*

GCLA is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people accessing our services and support and creates supportive environments, free from harm and abuse, where children and young people feel safe and supported.

GCLA recognises our responsibilities for the protection and wellbeing of children and young people accessing our services and support.

GCLA is committed to developing a workplace culture that is attuned to the child or young person's overall wellbeing endeavouring to ensure they are safe from abuse and harm.

GCLA is committed to collaboration with parents, government and non-government agencies and the local community to work together to support children and their families.

GCLA acknowledges that every child or young person deserves a permanent and stable home for life and that the outcomes for children and young people are much better when they have a stable living arrangement.

GCLA is committed to comprehensive employment screening, induction, ongoing training and education for staff.

GCLA selects and retain staff who share the values and commitment of the organisation, to provide high quality services to all customers, including children and young people. All employees are required to undergo Criminal History Screening conducted by Disability Services and Blue Card Screening.

GCLA ensures that all staff are aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect and that processes are in place for reporting significant risk of harm.

GCLA strives to ensure that the children and young people are kept informed of their rights and encourage children and young people to make informed and supported decisions and participate in all decisions in relation to their support, to the extent of their age and ability.

GCLA ensures that families and significant others are provided the opportunity to participate in any decision making in relation to meeting the needs of the children or young people and are kept informed of any progress/issues, where appropriate and supported under the Act.

GCLA acknowledge and respect the principle of self-determination and ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are provided opportunities to participate in the care, support and protection of their children and young people.

GCLA supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to access culturally appropriate services, where available.

In the delivery of any services and support with children and young people, GCLA shares information about the child or young persons with any other services/agencies required, with the consent of the child or young person and their representative.

GCLA facilitates a person-centred, strengths based, planning approach to assess the individual support needs of the child or young person. Based on this information, GCLA assists the child or young person to develop a range of goals aimed at building on the individual competencies that the child or young person already has. The goal of which is to ensure positive outcomes can be achieved.

GCLA works to comply with information protection principles. These principles include obligations with respect to data security, data quality (accuracy) and rights of access to one's own personal information. All staff have a responsibility to ensure that all information is documented and meets all external and mandatory reporting requirements.

GCLA obtains feedback from the children and young people in GCLA's care to ensure continuous improvement. It ensures that on an individual level, GCLA is continuing to meet the child or young person choices and preferences and on a broader level, to obtain information that will be useful for service planning and continuous improvement.

GCLA ensures that all personal information about children, young people and their families is treated in a way that respects the children and young people's rights to confidentiality

### **Children and Young People Code of Conduct**

Duty of Care is a Common Law concept that refers to the responsibility of staff to provide children and young people with an adequate level of protection against harm. It is expressed as a duty to take reasonable care to protect children and young people from all reasonably foreseeable risk of injury.

The question of what constitutes reasonable care in any given circumstance is determined objectively by a Court of Law and depends on the individual circumstances of each case. The Courts have found that the standard of care owed by care providers to children and young people is very high.

In their relationships with children and young people, staff must ensure that the physical and emotional wellbeing of children and young people is safeguarded and that their own behaviour is guided by their duty of care both within and beyond the care and support setting.

Within the protective practices, duty of care particularly relates to staff:

- expectations about their own conduct
- intervening in the inappropriate conduct of other adults
- reporting unprofessional behaviour of other adults if they observe or are informed of such behaviour.

The GCLA Code of Conduct specifically sets out the expectations and requirements in relation to the conduct of GCLA paid and unpaid staff, Board of Directors, contractors, consultants, students on placement, stakeholders, visitors and customers when interacting with all stakeholders including children and young people and is a mandatory induction training module for all paid and unpaid staff.

All paid and unpaid staff must comply with the Code of Conduct regardless of their employment or contract conditions.

#### All paid and unpaid staff must:

##### 1. Language

- Ensure communication and the language used between employees and customers is professional, respectful, polite, emotionally regulated and strengths based. At NO time are the following acceptable:
  - Inappropriate comments about a child or young person's appearance, including excessive flattering comments
  - Swearing and vulgar language
  - Inappropriate conversation or enquiries of a sexual nature (eg questions about a child or young person's sexuality or their sexual relationship with others)
  - Disrespectful or discriminatory treatment of, or manner towards, young people based on their perceived or actual sexual orientation
  - Use of inappropriate nicknames
  - Vilification or humiliation
  - Jokes or innuendo of a sexual nature
  - Obscene gestures and/or language
  - Facilitating/permitting access to pornographic material

- Failing to intervene in the sexual harassment of children and young people
- Correspondence of a personal nature via any medium (eg phone, text message, letters, email, social media, internet postings) that is unrelated to the staff member's role
- Introducing 'secrets'
- Discussing personal lifestyle details or opinions of self, other staff or children and young people unless directly relevant to the learning topic and with the individual's consent.

## 2. Supervision of children and young people

- Ensure children and young people are adequately supervised at all times. Generally support is provided one on one dependent on customer needs. In group activities there is a maximum of 4 customers to 1 employee. This is also determined by the customer's goals and funding guidelines.
- Consult with the parent/guardian to determine expectations as to when children may be left with GCLA or whether supervision is required. This is clearly specified in individual shift routines and the My Daily Life care plan signed by the parent/guardian of the child.
- Ensure clear details, physical locations, supervision requirements and specific arrangements for the drop-off and pick up of children and young people are outlined in individual shift routines and My Daily Life Care Plan and signed off by the parent/guardian. If there are any changes to the shift routine as notified by the parent/guardian, generally by phone, this information is relayed to the support worker on shift. Each shift routine contains detailed requirements for the collection of children such as when collecting a child or young person from school, itemising what the support worker is required to do such as showing identification and signing as proof of collection and complying with the school's collection requirements. Should a child be absent from the designated pick up area, the support worker is required to notify the GCLA office. The office contacts the parent/guardian or Next of Kin and if this is not possible, then the emergency contact would be contact. If no response is forthcoming, the Police are then contacted.

## 3. Physical Contact with a child or young person

- Ensure practical, age appropriate and consensual and/or authorised physical assistance is provided to a child or young person when required. Examples of appropriate physical contact are:
  - giving first aid
  - supporting children and young people who have hurt themselves
  - assisting with the toileting and personal care needs of a child or young person with a disability (a shift routine and My Daily Life care plan specifically states the identified need and response required) is developed with and approved by parents/guardians prior to contact)
  - non-intrusive gestures to comfort a child or young person who is experiencing grief and loss or distress, such as a hand on the upper arm or upper back
  - non-intrusive touch such as congratulating a child or young person by shaking hands or a pat on the upper arm or back.
  - Staff should remember the importance of accompanying such touch with positive and encouraging words.

Staff are required to seek permission from the child or young person to touch them prior to any contact occurring unless it is not practical or possible to do so (e.g. in an emergency). Staff are aware of and respect signs indicating the child is uncomfortable with physical contact. This may include limited eye contact or stepping away.

## 4. One-on-One contact with children or young people

- Identify any sensitivities or requirements for one on one contact with children and young people prior to the commencement of services and ensure these are documented in the individual shift routines, behavior support plans and My Daily Life care plans which are all approved and signed by the parent/guardians. As support is generally provided in one on one contact with a child or young person, staff are required to act transparently and age appropriately, ensure the contact is authorised as per the shift routine and My Daily Life care plan, a legitimate part of their role, timely, purposeful, provided during shift times with the consent of the parent/guardian and linked to the identified wellbeing of the child or young person.

GCLA works to provide a degree of privacy for children and young people. This may be to protect the child or young person's dignity, to provide an environment conducive to the service or assessment being provided or to respect the child or young person's desire for confidentiality. Children and young people often assume a high level of confidentiality when disclosing serious issues of a personal nature or reporting harassment or bullying. For these reasons, GCLA works to find a careful balance between, on the one hand, respecting the sensitive and private nature of service provision and, on the other hand, the professional, duty of care obligations for the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person (mandatory notification).

#### 5. Relationships with children and young people

- Ensure professional and role boundaries are maintained at all times. Professional and role boundaries are parameters that describe limits of a relationship where one person entrusts their welfare and safety to a professional, often in circumstances where there is a power imbalance. The support services provided by GCLA rely on the fostering of positive relationships between adults and children and young people. GCLA acknowledges that support workers and staff can have a significant influence in the lives of children and young people because the relationship involves regular contact over relatively long periods of time. Training for staff to understand how to foster positive relationships in ways that do not compromise the welfare of children and young people is provided.

Professional boundary violations by a staff member represent a breach of trust, a failure to meet a duty of care to children and young people, and a failure to follow GCLA Conduct of Conduct requirements. When staff violate boundaries they risk:

- serious and harmful consequences for the child or young person
- seriously undermine the goal-focused support relationship
- seriously undermine their professional reputation and the confidence of their suitability to work with children and young people
- performance management, possible termination and/or criminal charges.

GCLA acknowledges that staff working in local communities face additional challenges in managing professional boundaries. They are more likely to have social relationships with the families/parents of the children and young people with whom they work and are, therefore, more likely to share social and sporting events or membership at various community clubs or associations. This means they will have legitimate reasons, on occasions, to attend social/cultural events with the children and young people with whom they work or to be visited by them in the company of their parents. These social and cultural engagements are an important part of community life and a positive contribution to the wellbeing of staff working in our local community. Aboriginal, Torres Strait and South Sea Islanders and culturally and linguistically diverse employees may have family and social connections to the children and families that they are working with. They may also have cultural or family obligations that may present additional challenges and require support from line managers to establish professional boundaries when working with some children/young people and their families.

GCLA offers the following guidance for managing these situations:

- staff should conduct themselves in a way that will not give others reason to question their suitability to work with children and young people and that will not create discomfort for children and young people in their interactions and relationship with them.
- staff should politely refuse to discuss matters relating to the workplace and should not discuss children and young people other than at times specifically set aside for that purpose in a professional setting
- any concern a staff member has about whether or not a situation may be compromising or breaching a professional relationship should be discussed with their line manager and an approved plan of action followed.



## 6. Behaviour Management

- Ensure that the shift routine, My Daily Life care plan and Behaviour Support Plan developed by a qualified person, guides their support with a child or young person with challenging behaviours.
- Ensure that children and young people's files are read prior to commencing support shifts with any individual
- Staff are referred to the Restrictive Practice, Behaviour Support and Restraint Policy for further information.

Non-physical intervention is the most acceptable way of managing the behaviour of children and young people. Where an issue with a child or young person's behaviour becomes apparent, non-physical interventions include but is not limited to:

- directing other children and young people to move away from the situation
- talking with the individual child or young person (asking the child or young person to stop the behaviour, and telling the child or young person what will happen if they do not stop)
- directing the child or young person to a safe place
- directing other children and young people to a safe place
- requesting assistance from their line manager or in extreme cases, the Police.

Use of verbal directions is always preferred to physical intervention. It is not appropriate to make physical contact with a child or young person (eg pushing, grabbing, poking, pulling, blocking) in order to ensure they comply with directions. Staff working with preschool-age children must not hold children against their will (eg on their laps, between their legs or on the floor) to ensure attention.

Under no circumstances should staff engage in any form of conduct which might cause physical or emotional harm to children and young people.

## 7. Transport of children and young people

- Ensure that the parent or guardian has consented to transporting the child or young person
- Ensure the requirements for the shift are as per the shift notes, My Daily Life care plan and Behaviour Support Plan are followed when assisting children and young people to access and participate in the community
- Ensure when the child or young person is being transported that compliance with Queensland Transport requirements occurs. Families are to provide any restraints and car seats.

GCLA ensures that all paid and unpaid staff have a current drivers licence and full comprehensive car insurance.

## 8. Change rooms/toilets

- Ensure personal and daily living support is provided according to the My Daily Life care plan and shift routine that is approved by the parent/guardian. A child and young person's shift routine may include waiting outside the toilet door for customers or may specify that assistance is required for personal care and/or dressing. Being treated with respect and conserving a customer's dignity and privacy is fundamental to high-quality and ethical support and the child or young person's experience. When dignity is absent from care and support, people feel devalued, lacking control and comfort. It is necessary when providing support to respond to the individual's requirements in a manner that is respectful, compassionate and sensitive whilst responding to a child and young person's diversity and cultural needs, their privacy and the decisions they make.

## 9. Managing injuries or illnesses

- Ensure compliance with the GCLA Incident and Investigation Work Instruction occurs where incidents are lodged in ProSims TimeOnline as GCLA is committed to ensuring that all risks to the organisation, its paid and unpaid staff and customers are identified. These are managed and monitored in a consistent manner so that investigations can occur and corrective actions tracked to prevent reoccurrence and to continuously improve service delivery responses.

Line Managers are responsible for ensuring members of their teams are reporting any incidents and managing investigations where appropriate.

All staff are responsible for identifying and reporting all behavioural, illness, injury, medication and physical incidents, seizures and instances of customers absconding, they become aware of.

#### 10. Visitor policy

- Ensure to only permit visitors on GCLA sites for a short time and for specific reasons and accompany any visitors at all times.
- Ensure all visitors to customers are pre-approved prior to support and documented in the My Daily Life care plan.
- Ensure that at no time, are visitors to be left alone with children and young people.

Reception areas at all sites are open to visitors. Contractors, suppliers and service vendors, like IT technicians and plumbers, can enter GCLA premises only to complete their job duties and are supervised by paid staff.

All visitors are required to be accompanied by a paid staff member when entering any GCLA site to ensure they will not pose threats to our customers, staff and property, distract employees from their work or be exposed to danger.

#### 11. Photography policy

- Ensure that children and young people are definitely NOT photographed without written consent from the parent or guardian. If unsure, please refer to the customer file and/or contact your line manager for authorisation.

The majority of occasions when people take photographs of children and young people are valid and do not provide any cause for concern. Unfortunately, however, there are occasions when this is not the case, and these are some of the risks associated with photographing children:

- The collection and passing on of images which may be misused;
- The identification of individual children to facilitate abuse;
- The identification of children in vulnerable circumstances.

#### 12. Use of technology and social media

- Ensure that information and communication technologies (ICTs) are used lawfully, ethically, professionally and in a controlled and accountable manner. This applies during and beyond work hours, reflecting the lawful, ethical and professional requirements for working at GCLA and detailed in the Employee Handbook issued at staff inductions.

Paid and unpaid are personally responsible for the content that they publish on social media, electronic communications and phones. As a result, paid and unpaid staff are expected to exercise professional discretion and sound judgement in their use of social media, electronic communications and phones, even for personal communication.

Comments and posts on social media, electronic communication and phones can leave a permanent record. Staff members are expected to recognise the potential for negative consequences for themselves, GCLA, their colleagues, customers, parents/carers and the extended GCLA community through their personal use of social media, electronic communications and phones.

Where any doubt exists, staff are expected to seek clear direction from their line manager.

### 13. Smoking

- Comply with all laws in relation to the use and supply of tobacco and smoking products, including the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 (Queensland) and not purchase or provide children or young people with smoking products or encourage or condone the use of smoking products by children and young people.
- Ensure that smoking products are not encouraged, purchased or condoned with children and young
- Ensure that at no time whilst providing support to any customer, including children and young people does a paid or unpaid staff member engage in smoking.

GCLA has a legal obligation to provide a safe workplace for employees and to protect employees, customers, including children and young people and others from the harmful effect of tobacco smoke in the workplace, as such smoking must only occur in designated smoking areas at the main office.

### 14. Alcohol

- Not consume alcohol or be under the influence of alcohol when performing work duties or in any other circumstances where paid or unpaid staff are responsible for the care, support or supervision of children and young people including on shift and at functions, camps or excursions.
- Not to purchase or provide children and young people with alcohol or encourage or condone the use of alcohol by children and young people.

Alcohol that is present on GCLA sites for approved purposes is required to be contained in a secure location which is not accessible by children and young people. The CEO of GCLA is required to approve of the provision of alcohol at work events or social functions.

### 15. Medications and Drugs

- Comply with the law and must not take, be under the influence of, or be in the possession of illegal drugs. Staff are prohibited to be under the influence of prescription drugs that might cause an impairment while they are at work or in any circumstances where they are responsible for the care, support and supervision of children and young people. If a paid or unpaid staff member is using medication that may affect their performance at work, the staff member is required to notify their line manager.
- Not purchase or provide children and young people or other staff members with illegal drugs. It is an expectation that paid and unpaid staff will not encourage or condone the use of illegal drugs by children, young people or other staff members.

### 16. Organisation Standards and General Safety

- Comply with organisational policies and practices, actively participate and meet assessment requirements in induction and Training sessions that include but are not limited to Workforce Planning, Recruitment and Selection; Conditions of Employment; Code of Conduct and Culture; Workforce Training, Development and Support; Workforce Disciplinary Action & Performance Management; Diversity and Inclusion, Training and Development; Workplace Health and Safety; Medication Administration; Customer Service Environment; Service Delivery and Engagement policies and the Support Framework and their associated work instructions.
- Ensure that children are protected from all forms of harm including bullying, harassment and intimidation which is based on gender, culture or ethnicity by:
  - listening to the child's views, respect what they say and involve them when decision are made
  - respecting the values, needs, cultures, resources and strengths of children and their families
  - ensuring the social, emotional and developmental needs of children are met in a safe environment
  - providing a safe, nurturing, stable and secure care environment
  - ensuring a high standard of supervision of a child or young person is always kept
  - giving warnings to children before directing children to finish up activities.
  - ensuring parents/guardians are notified of any roster changes and are clearly informed about the name of the employee rostered to support their child
  - ensuring that behavior towards, and relationship with children, reflects the highest of standards and comply with the conduct prescribed in the Code of Conduct.



- ensuring that children feel safe and are protected from harm.
- reporting all behaviors that can reasonably consider harmful to children.
- accepting that failure to behave in a manner consistent with the requirements of this Policy and other organisational policies may result in criminal proceedings and/or disciplinary action being taken against the staff person.

#### 17. Confidentiality of information

- Adhere to organisational policies and practices including Confidentiality and Privacy, Customer Human and Legal Rights, Code of Conduct and Culture, Information Management and Information Security Policies and are required to attend mandatory training at Induction and refresher training throughout their employment and meet assessment requirements.

GCLA is committed to protecting the confidentiality and privacy of personal information which the organisation collects, stores and administers and that persons dealing with us understand our practices in relation to the management of their personal information. GCLA customers and paid and unpaid staff have legislated rights to confidentiality and privacy.

GCLA is committed to establishing and maintaining information management practices including information about disclosures or suspicions of harm, that meet its customer and stakeholder expectations, business needs and accountability requirements.

#### **Capability**

##### Recruiting, selecting, training and managing paid and unpaid staff

GCLA has effective policies and work instructions in place for the recruitment, selection, training, support and performance management for paid and unpaid staff to:

- identify applicants that are not suitable for employment with GCLA
- assist GCLA to source qualified and experienced staff who contribute to facilitating a safe and supportive environment for children and young people
- ensure that staff receive adequate and appropriate training and support to deliver child-related services in a safe and productive way and
- ensure that any issues with staff performance or conduct are identified early and actioned appropriately.

#### **Concerns**

Children and young people can only be protected from harm if it is reported and dealt with quickly and effectively.

##### Definition of Harm according to the Child Protection Act 1999 (Section 9):

- A child is an individual under 18 years of age.
- Child abuse is action, behaviours or inaction by an adult towards a child or young person that harms or endanger the child.
- Harm is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused.
- Harm can be caused by: can be
  - physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect;
  - sexual abuse or exploitation
- Harm can be caused by a single act or omission or a series of acts or omissions.

Considerations when forming a reasonable suspicion about harm to a child include whether there are detrimental effects on the child's body or the psychological or emotional state that are evident or likely to become evident in the future, their nature and severity and the likelihood they will continue and the child's age (section 13C of the Child Protection Act 1999).

See below for a predictive tool for potential signs of harm:

<b>TYPES OF ABUSE</b> <i>Actions/behaviours by perpetrator</i>	<b>RESULTING HARM</b> <i>Impact experienced by the child</i>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Physical abuse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hitting</li> <li>• Shaking</li> <li>• Burning/scalding</li> <li>• Biting</li> <li>• Causing bruise or fractures by excessive discipline</li> <li>• Poisoning</li> <li>• Giving children alcohol, illegal drugs or inappropriate medication</li> <li>• Domestic and family violence</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Physical</b> <i>Refers to the body</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bruising</li> <li>• Fractures</li> <li>• Internal injuries</li> <li>• Burns</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Psychological or Emotional abuse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scapegoating</li> <li>• Persistent rejection or hostility</li> <li>• Constant yelling, insults or criticism</li> <li>• Cultural affronts</li> <li>• Teasing/bullying</li> <li>• Domestic and family violence</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Psychological</b> <i>Refers to the mind and cognitive processes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning and developmental delays</li> <li>• Impaired self-image</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Neglect</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not giving a child sufficient food, housing, clothing, enough sleep, hygienic living conditions, health care and adequate supervision</li> <li>• Leaving children unattended</li> <li>• Children missing school</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Emotional</b> <i>Refers to the ability to express emotions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Hypervigilance</li> <li>• Poor self esteem</li> <li>• Self harm</li> <li>• Fear/anxiety</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Sexual abuse or exploitation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kissing or holding a child in a sexual manner</li> <li>• Exposing a sexual body part to a child</li> <li>• Exposing children to sexual acts or pornography</li> <li>• Making obscene phone calls or remarks to a child</li> <li>• Having sexual relations with a child or young person under 16 years of age</li> </ul>	

However, this is not a complete list of the types of abuse and resulting harm that may be experienced by children and young people.

### GENERAL INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE

Some general indicators of child abuse include:

- showing wariness and distrust of adults
- rocking, sucking or biting excessively
- bedwetting or soiling
- demanding or aggressive behaviour
- sleeping difficulties, often being tired and falling asleep
- low self-esteem
- difficulty relating to adults and peers
- abusing alcohol or drugs
- being seemingly accident prone
- having broken bones or unexplained bruising, burns or welts in different stages of healing
- being unable to explain an injury, or providing explanations that are inconsistent, vague or unbelievable
- feeling suicidal or attempting suicide
- having difficulty concentrating
- being withdrawn or overly obedient
- being reluctant to go home
- creating stories, poems or artwork about abuse.

### GENERAL INDICATORS OF NEGLECT

Some indicators of neglect include:

- malnutrition, begging, stealing or hoarding food
- poor hygiene, matted hair, dirty skin or body odour
- unattended physical or medical problems
- comments from a child that no one is home to provide care
- being constantly tired
- frequent lateness or absence from school
- inappropriate clothing, especially inadequate clothing in winter
- frequent illness, infections or sores
- being left unsupervised for long periods.

A **disclosure of harm** occurs when someone, including a child, tells you about harm that has happened, is happening or is likely to happen to a child. It is important to act quickly and in the best interests of the child or young person after a disclosure of harm is received, irrespective of the alleged source of harm.

A **suspicion of harm** is when someone has a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm. This includes circumstances which relate to an unborn child who may be in need of protection after they are born.

[Handling disclosures or suspicions of harm including reporting guidelines](#)

Staff are advised to manage a disclosure of harm by:

- remaining calm, listening attentively, actively and non-judgementally. Avoid looking shocked, panicked or in disbelief as the child needs to know they are being listened to
- locating a private place to talk, without interruption
- encouraging the person to talk in their own words. Ask questions like “can you tell me what happened, can you tell me more about that?”
- telling the child or other informer such as a parent who informs you that their child has been abused by a partner who is no longer living with the child, that they have done the right thing by telling you
- advising the child that you need to tell someone else who can help the child. Discuss the disclosure with Senior Management who will refer the matter to the CEO for guidance and direction.
- documenting the disclosure clearly and accurately including a detailed description of the dates, times, locations and who was present, recording exactly what the person disclosing has said using “I said” and “they said” statements, the questions you asks, any comments you made & your actions following the disclosure
- not attempting to investigate or mediate an outcome. Staff must not contact the perpetrator, regardless of who they are. Only Officers with the Department of Child Safety or the Police investigate by speaking with the perpetrator.

#### Non-mandatory reporting

Child protection is everybody’s responsibility and every person should report to Child safety if that person forms a reasonable suspicion that a child (including an unborn child) has suffered, is suffering or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm AND does not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm.

People with mandatory reporting obligations include doctors, registered nurses, approved teachers employed at a school and police officers with child protection responsibilities.

GCLA staff are NOT mandatory reporters. Staff must inform Senior Management who refer the matter to GCLA’s CEO who then provides guidance and direction.

If, after informing Senior Management and receiving directions from the CEO, a staff member is to make a report to Child Safety Services then:

- contact occurs with the Regional Intake Service, during normal business hours on <https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/about-us/child-safety-servcie-centres/regional-intake-services>

OR

- contact with the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on 1800 177 135 or 07 3235 9999 for after hours and on weekend. The service operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week

#### Breach Management Plan

GCLA take any breach of policy or work instruction seriously including breaches to this Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy.

A **breach** is any action or inaction by paid or unpaid staff, including children and young people, that fail to comply with this Strategy.

Breaches of this strategy will be addressed by relevant senior managers and/or CEO depending on the nature of the breach and if applicable, employees who have breached this Strategy may be action to disciplinary processes. Breaches will be managed using the relevant policy and work instruction that relates to the nature and classification of the breach. Breaches may be classified as minor, moderate, major or extreme and are to be documented on the relevant incident forms. All breaches must be recorded, documented and maintained in a confidential manner, in relation to protecting the privacy of children and young people.

Actions that may be taken by GCLA in respect to a breach of this Child and Youth Risk management Strategy include:

- management or remedial action
- providing closer supervision
- providing further education and training
- mediating between those involved in the incident
- disciplinary action (if necessary)
- reviewing current policies, work instructions and practices
- developing new policies and work instruction.

#### Risk Management Plan for High Risk Activities

A high-risk activity or special event, due to their nature, require extra planning to ensure that appropriate control measures are implemented to manage the identified risk. Forward planning to identify risks assists to reduce the possibility of children and young people being harmed.

All activities are assessed for risk prior to the high-risk activity or special event and must be approved by the Senior Management Team and documented in the Risk Register. The GCLA Risk Management process is adapted from the Standards Australia AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 Risk Management Principles and Guidelines:

1. Describe the activity
2. Identify the risks
3. Analyse the risks
4. Evaluate the risks
5. Manage the risks and reassess, and
6. Review

#### **Consistency**

##### Blue Card System Compliance

GCLA demonstrates the organisation's commitment to maintaining a safe and supportive environment for children and young people by complying with legislative requirements under the Working with Children Check Queensland's blue card system. The blue card system is a key prevention and monitoring system of people working with children and young people in Queensland which aims to minimise the risks of harm to children and young people by contributing to the creation of safe and supportive environments, and is founded on the principle that all children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm.

All employees are required to complete and return the Blue and Yellow Card and National Police check application prior to their commencement.

An individual cannot be employed by GCLA if they have been convicted for murder, sexual assault or have been convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for any other form of assault. If an employee is convicted of a precluding offence during their employment, GCLA will terminate the individual's employment immediately.

GCLA does not engage a person who holds a current negative notice or negative exemption notice. If a check returns with a negative notice, the applicant is prohibited from working for GCLA as per the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*.

National Police Checks, Blue Cards and Yellow Cards are renewed every 3 years. GCLA establishes and maintains an Employee Register which is a written register of all paid and unpaid employees.



Communication and Support Strategies

This Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy is communicated to all paid and unpaid staff through compulsory Induction and mandatory training attendance, information sessions and newsletters and is available for all staff on the Customer Management Record system (CMRS) along with all policies, work instructions, forms and publications. This ensures that all paid and unpaid staff and stakeholders are aware of their responsibilities and understand what is acceptable behaviour for interacting with children and young people, enables people to feel comfortable addressing issues of concern and reduces the likelihood of breaches to this strategy.

Paid and unpaid staff may require support to deal with issues such as behavior management, stress, conflict, bullying, child protection concerns, breaches of the risk management strategy and dealing with disclosures or suspicions of harm. GCLA offer a range of support methods such as coaching and mentoring, supervision, employee debriefing and referral to the Employee Assistance Provider.

**4. Review Processes**

<b>Policy review frequency:</b> Every 2 years unless updates are required	<b>Accountability for review:</b> CEO
<b>Review process:</b> Delegated responsibility from the CEO to the relevant line manager, according to the Document Review Schedule and process.	
<b>Documentation and communication:</b> Documents are controlled on the Customer Management Record System (CMRS) and updates are communicated to all staff via email and/or staff meetings.	