



Child Safe Environments Policy

Last reviewed August 2014

To be reviewed annually and as required.

ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE D'ADELAIDE

Child Safe Environments Policy

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1. Purpose

This policy has been written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the Alliance Française d'Adelaide to Child Safety and establishing and maintaining a child-safe and child-friendly environment.

2. Context

This policy reflects our commitment to provide a safe environment where every person has the right to be treated with respect and is safe and protected from harm.

It complies with our obligations under the *Children's Protection Act 1993*, including:

- Section 8B – 8D – Child safe environments and criminal history assessments for people working with children; and
- Section 11 – Mandatory reporting.

It also complies with the *Child safe environments: Principles of good Alliance Française d'Adelaide and Child safe environments: Standards for dealing with information obtained about the criminal history of employees and volunteers who work with children* issued by the Chief Executive of the Department for Education and Child Development.

3. Scope

This policy, from the date of endorsement, applies to all persons working within this the Alliance Française d' Adelaide including:

- employees (permanent and casual)
- volunteers
- contractors
- sub-contractors
- indirect service providers
- work experience students
- any other individual involved in this Alliance Française d'Adelaide

Note: In this policy, the term "employee" is intended to cover all persons occupying any position listed above.

4. Commitment to child safety

The Alliance Française d' Adelaide is committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people accessing our services and the welfare of the children and young people in our care will always be our first priority.

All children and young people who come the Alliance Française d'Adelaide have a right to feel and be safe. Everyone within our organisation has a role to play in ensuring a safe environment for children and young people.

This includes management, employees and volunteers working with children and young people or in close proximity to them, and employees with access to the records of children and young people.

We have appointed two child safety officers as a first point of contact to provide advice and support to employees, volunteers, patients, children, young people, parents and caregivers regarding the safety and well-being of children and young people accessing our organisation.

The child safety officers are Jean-Christophe Trentinella and Rebecca Cooke.

The child safety officers are also responsible for monitoring our child safety policy and Alliance Française d'Adelaides, including our ongoing training needs relating to child protection issues.

This policy was developed in collaboration with management and employees of the Alliance Française d'Adelaide.

5. Children's participation

The Alliance Française d'Adelaide encourages and respects the views of children and young people who access our services. We listen to and act upon any concerns that children, young people or their families raise with us. We ensure that children, young people and their families know their rights and how to access the complaints procedures available to them.

We provide clear age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate explanations to children and young people and allow for questions during consultation and treatment. We involve children and young people in decision-making as appropriate.

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory Alliance Française d'Adelaides.

6. Recruitment Alliance Française d'Adelaides

The Alliance Française d'Adelaide takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. We employ a range of screening measures and apply best Alliance Française d'Adelaide standards in the screening and recruitment of employees and volunteers. We interview and conduct referee checks on all employees.

We conduct criminal history assessment for people working with children, as set out in Section 8B of the *Children's Protection Act 1993*. Criminal history assessments are required for anyone within our organisation that:

- has regular contact with children and is not directly supervised at all times;
- works in close proximity to children on a regular basis and is not directly supervised at all times; or

- supervises or manages persons who:
 - have regular contact with children or
 - work in close proximity to children on a regular basis; or
- has access to health records relating to children or young people.

Exemptions from this requirement may apply in some circumstances.

We ensure that criminal history information is dealt with in accordance with the Standards developed by the Chief Executive of the Department for Education and Child Development.

Our procedure for conducting criminal history assessments are provided in *Appendix 1*.

7. Code of Conduct

Everyone covered by the scope of this policy is aware of, and must abide by, our Code of Conduct. Our Code of Conduct was developed in collaboration with all our employees (*Code of Conduct Appendix 2*).

8. Support for employees and volunteers

The Alliance Française d'Adelaide seeks to attract and retain the best employees and volunteers. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We ensure that employees who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training so that their performance is developed and enhanced to promote the establishment and maintenance of a child safe environment.

Strategies we have implemented include:

- All new employees undergo induction and receive a copy of our child safe policy and code of conduct.
- All employees receive regular supervision sessions that include a focus on ongoing learning about child protection and other matters that affect children and young people.
- Every three years, employees working regularly with children and young people are expected to attend training sessions about their mandatory notification obligations.
- Two child safety officers have been appointed as a first point of contact for all child protection matters.

9. Reporting and responding to suspected child abuse and neglect

Making appropriate reports of abuse or neglect

The Alliance Française d'Adelaide will not tolerate incidents of child abuse.

All employees and volunteers understand their obligation to notify the Child Abuse Report Line (C.A.R.L.) on **13 14 78** as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable suspicion that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected.

Every three years, we expect employees and volunteers to attend information sessions about these mandatory reporting obligations. We also ensure that employees and volunteers have access to relevant information resources available from the Department for Education and Child Development, including:

- Child safe environments: Guidelines for mandated notifiers and information for organisations (available to view or download from www.families.sa.gov.au/childsafe)
- Department for Education and Child Development's reporting child abuse website: www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/EcarlChildAbuseReportingO.pdf

We ensure that support is also available for the employee making the report, particularly where an ongoing service is provided to the child, young person and their family.

Supporting children, young people and their families

Child protection is everyone's responsibility. Our organisation recognises that even where a report is made, we may still have a role in supporting the child or young person. This support may include:

- Referring the child, young person or their family to other appropriate services
- Displaying information in our waiting area about other relevant services that may help, and
- Ensuring that the child or young person's medical needs continue to be met following the making of a report

Dealing with reports or concerns relating to the actions of an employee of our organisation.

In addition to making a report to the Child Abuse Report Line (C.A.R.L.), employees must also report to management any reasonable suspicion that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected by another employee. Employees of the Alliance Française d'Adelaide have a duty of care to report any concerns about the behaviour of another employee to management even if they are not mandated notifiers under the *Children's Protection Act 1993*.

In response to any report to management concerning an employee of this Alliance Française d'Adelaide, management may determine to take disciplinary action against the employee and take other protective actions to ensure the safety of children and young people within our organisation.

Other protective actions may also be introduced to ensure the safety of children and young people within our organisation.

10. Strategies to minimise risk

The Alliance Française d'Adelaide takes steps to minimise the risks to children due to the actions or omissions of employees, contractors or other people within our organisation. We review our risks regularly to address any new or emerging risks in order to maintain a safe environment for children.

Strategies we have implemented to minimise and control risks to children and young people include:

- High risk situations are addressed in our Risk Management Plan.
- All employees are required to abide by our child safe environments policy.
- Employees are aware of and are responsive to the particular needs and vulnerabilities of children and young people (such as age, language barriers, developmental capabilities, disability, mental health, trauma or abuse).
- All parents and caregivers are made aware that young children entering our organisation must be supervised at all times. Where a child or young person is unaccompanied by a parent or caregiver, the Alliance Française d'Adelaide will consider whether a chaperone is required.
- We respond to any concerns that children, or their families or caregivers raise with us quickly and fairly
- Employees understand their obligation to notify the **Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78** as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable suspicion that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected
- We ensure a physically and socially safe environment, for children and young people that is free of any identifiable hazards.

Evaluation of these strategies and the development of additional strategies, to minimise and control risks to children and young people, occur as part of our ongoing risk management process.

11. Harassment/bullying

The Alliance Française d'Adelaide opposes all forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying. We take this issue seriously and encourage anyone who believes that they, or another person, has been harassed, discriminated against or bullied to raise this issue with Rebecca Cooke or Jean-Christophe Trentinella.

12. Communication

The Alliance Française d'Adelaide will ensure that everyone to whom this policy applies is aware of and has had an opportunity to read the policy.

We also ask employees to sign a written statement indicating that they have read and will abide by our child-safe policy. We retain a copy of all signed statements.

13. Related policies and procedures

This may include:

- Code of Conduct
- Statement to be signed by employees indicating they have read and will abide by this policy
- Any relevant policies or procedures that our organisation has developed to protect children, including:
 - Policy and procedure for dealing with employees charged with, or under investigation for, a serious criminal offence
 - Employees and volunteer recruitment procedures, including those relating to conducting criminal history assessments (refer to appendix 1)
 - Mandatory reporting procedures (including where a suspicion is reported to our organisation)
 - Risk management strategy
 - Any other policies and procedures developed to manage risks and protect children.

<i>Approved by</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Review date</i>

Conducting criminal history assessments

Assessments required for prescribed positions

All employees and volunteers of this organisation who occupy a prescribed position (as set out under Section 8B (8) of the *Children's Protection Act 1993*) are required to undergo a criminal history assessment once every three years.

Criminal history assessments are also required prior to the appointment of new employees and volunteers to prescribed positions.

Exemptions from this requirement may apply in some circumstances (see below). However this organisation retains the discretion to decide on a case-by-case basis whether any relevant exemptions will be exercised.

This requirement applies to all employees and volunteers who regularly work with or around children in an unsupervised capacity or have access to children's health records.

Procedure for conducting criminal history assessments

Note: The Children's Protection Act 1993 enables organisations to decide the manner in which they will conduct criminal history assessments. Please choose the option below that reflects the method of assessment that the Alliance Française d'Adelaide has adopted.

Option 1

A current Letter of Clearance from the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion Screening Unit is a precondition of employment in a prescribed position at the Alliance Française d'Adelaide. The cost of obtaining a Letter of Clearance will be negotiated between the Alliance Française d'Adelaide and the employee or applicant.

Prior to the appointment of a new employee or volunteer and then at three yearly intervals, the Alliance Française d'Adelaide will direct the employee/volunteer to obtain a Letter of Clearance from the Screening Unit as evidence that the applicant does not pose an increased risk of harm to children. Letters of Clearance are obtained for all current employees and volunteers who are working with children once every three years.

The Alliance Française d'Adelaide may obtain a further criminal history assessment for an employee/volunteer at any time that the Alliance Française d'Adelaide believes it necessary or desirable for the purpose of maintaining a child safe environment.

The informed written consent of the employee/volunteer is required prior to conducting a criminal history assessment. The Screening Unit's informed consent form is available from www.dfc.sa.gov.au/pub/screening.

Information relating to a persons criminal history and the assessment process is managed securely and confidentially and in accordance with the *Child safe environments: Standards for dealing with information obtained about the criminal history of employees and volunteers who work with children* issued pursuant to Section 8A of the *Children's Protection Act 1993*.

Option 2

A satisfactory criminal history assessment is a precondition of working in a prescribed position at the Alliance Française d'Adelaide.

Prior to the appointment of a new employee/volunteer and then at three yearly intervals, the Alliance Française d'Adelaide will direct the employee/volunteer to obtain a National Police Certificate (NPC) from South Australia Police. The cost of obtaining a NPC will be negotiated between the Alliance Française d'Adelaide and the employee/volunteer.

South Australia Police require the explicit written consent of the applicant prior to the release of criminal history information. The NPC application form is available from

http://www.police.sa.gov.au/sapol/services/information_requests/national_police_certificate.jsp.

Where a person has no disclosable criminal history, the assessment is successfully completed and no further action in respect to an assessment is required.

Where an individual does have a criminal history, the Alliance Française d'Adelaide assesses this information in accordance with Standard 5 of the *Child safe environments: Standards for dealing with information obtained about the criminal history of employees and volunteers who work with children*.

Each assessment is conducted on its individual merits and with consideration to the inherent requirements of the position. Principles of procedural fairness and natural justice are applied throughout the decision-making process and the individual is provided an opportunity to confirm or dispute the information contained within the report and to provide contextual information for consideration during the assessment process.

Criminal history information will not be retained once a decision has been made regarding the person's suitability to work with children. No criminal history information will be retained beyond three months in any circumstances.

In accordance with its legal requirements, the Alliance Française d'Adelaide will retain the following information regarding its decision:

- That a criminal history report was obtained
- How the criminal history information affected decision making processes
- Statutory declarations (where applicable).

The Alliance Française d'Adelaide may obtain a further criminal history assessment for an employee/volunteer at any time that the Alliance Française d'Adelaide believes it necessary or desirable for the purpose of maintaining a child safe environment.

Other evidence (optional)

Where appropriate, the Alliance Française d'Adelaide may utilise a number of forms of evidence (obtained within the last three years) to assess a person's suitability to work with children. This includes:

- A National Police Certificate that does not expressly state that it cannot be used as a clearance to work with children
- A Letter of Clearance to work with children from the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion Screening Unit
- A valid and current interstate working with children check.

Acceptance of other forms of evidence is at the discretion of the Alliance Française d'Adelaide and is subject to the person completing a 100-point check to confirm the true identity of the applicant.

The Alliance Française d'Adelaide may also at its discretion seek a statutory declaration for any employee(s) or volunteer(s) who have been citizens or permanent residents of a country other than Australia since turning 18 years of age.

Exemptions

The following organisations, persons and positions are exempt from the application of Section 8B of the Act:

- (a) an organisation that provides equipment, food or venues for children's parties or events and does not provide any other services;
- (b) a person who undertakes work on a voluntary basis to provide a service in his or her capacity as a parent or guardian of a child who is ordinarily provided with the service;
- (c) a person who undertakes work on a voluntary basis to provide a service and who is under 18 years of age;
- (d) a person who undertakes work in the course of, or for the purposes of, an event or activity that takes place over a period of not more than 10 consecutive days or not more than 1 day in any month;
- (e) a person appointed as a police officer;
- (f) a person who is a registered teacher (within the meaning of the *Teachers Registration and Standards Act 2004*);
- (g) a person who undertakes, or a position that only involves, work that is not for the exclusive benefit of children and is not provided to any child on an individual basis;

- (h) a position that only involves prescribed functions because children are employed or engaged to work as volunteers by the person occupying the position or by that person's employer;
- (i) a position in which all work involving children is undertaken in the presence of the children's parents or guardians and in which there is ordinarily no physical contact with the children.

Child Protection guidelines for staff of the Alliance Française d'Adelaide

Caring for children and young people brings additional responsibilities for employees and volunteers of the Alliance Française d'Adelaide.

All employees and volunteers of the Alliance Française d'Adelaide are responsible for promoting the safety and well-being of children and young people by:

- Ensuring the safety and welfare of the child or young person is paramount at all times.
- Treating all children and young people with dignity, equality and respect.
- Adhering to the Alliance Française d'Adelaide's child safe environments policy at all times.
- Listening and responding appropriately to the views and concerns of children and young people within the Alliance Française d'Adelaide.
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people within the Alliance Française d'Adelaide.
- Where appropriate, ensuring that a suitable adult is present when consulting with a child or young person.
- Ensuring children and young people understand their rights and explaining to the child in age-appropriate language what they can expect during the consultation.
- Responding quickly, fairly and transparently to any serious complaints made by a child, young person or their parent/guardian.
- Notifying the **Child Abuse Report Line (C.A.R.L.) on 13 14 78** as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable suspicion that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected.

Employees will not:

- Take part in any unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person.
- Discriminate against any child or young person because of age, gender, cultural background, religion, vulnerability or sexuality.
- Develop any 'special' relationships with children or young people outside of the professional relationship.