South Australian Friends and Equine Inc

(Hereafter referred to as SAFE)

**Child Safe Policy**

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1. **Purpose**

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of SAFE to child safety and establishing and maintaining child safe and child friendly environments.

1. **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 Practice and Child Safe Environments: Standards for dealing with information obtained about a person’s criminal history as part of a relevant history assessment issued by the Chief Executive DECD

1. **Scope**

This policy, from the date of endorsement, applies to all people involved in the organisation, including:

* + employees (permanent and casual)
	+ volunteers
	+ contractors
	+ sub-contractors
	+ work experience students
	+ indirect service providers
	+ any other individual involved in this organisation

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

1. **Commitment to child safety**

All children who come to SAFE have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people accessing our services and the welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where all children are valued and feel safe.

We have appointed a child safety officer as a first point of contact to provide advice and support to children, parents, employees and volunteers regarding the safety and well-being of children in our organisation.

1. **Children’s participation**

SAFE 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 teach children what they can do if they feel unsafe.

We ensure that children, young people and their families know their rights and how to access the complaints procedures available to them.

 We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.

1. **Recruitment practices**

SAFE 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 practice standards in the screening and recruitment of employees and volunteers.

We conduct relevant history assessment for people working with children, as set out in Section 8B of the *Children’s Protection Act 1993*. Relevant 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 sensitive 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 Child Safe Environments Standards.

1. **Code of Conduct**

All members are made aware of, and must abide by, our Code of Conduct. Our Code of Conduct was developed in collaboration with all our employees, volunteers, the children who use our services and their parents.

1. **Support for employees and volunteers**

SAFE 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/volunteers who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training so that their capacity is developed and enhanced to promote the establishment and maintenance of a child safe environment.

Strategies we have implemented include:

* + A child safety officer has been appointed as a first point of contact for all child protection matters.
1. **Reporting and responding to suspected child abuse and neglect**

***Information about making appropriate reports of abuse or neglect is available from the Families SA website*** [***http://www.families.sa.gov.au/childsafe***](http://www.families.sa.gov.au/childsafe)***.***

SAFE will not tolerate incidents of child abuse.

All employees and volunteers 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 has been, or is being, abused or neglected.

From time to time we provide opportunities for volunteers to attend information sessions about these mandatory reporting obligations We also ensure that volunteers have access to relevant information resources such as:

* Child safe environment: Guidelines for mandated notifiers and information for organisations (available to view or download from [www.families.sa.gov.au/sites/g/ files/net916/f/reporting\_child\_abuse\_and\_neglect\_ guidelines\_mandated\_notifiers.pdf](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CHorse%20SA%5CDownloads%5Cwww.families.sa.gov.au%5Csites%5Cg%5C%20files%5Cnet916%5Cf%5Creporting_child_abuse_and_neglect_%20guidelines_mandated_notifiers.pdf))
* Play by the rules fact sheets and online training
* Keeping children safe in recreation and sport booklets

We ensure that support is also available for the volunteer 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. SAFE 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 about services that can assist children and their families (such as the Kids Helpline and Youth Healthline) in areas accessed by children and their families.

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

In addition to making a report to the Child Abuse Report Line, employees and volunteers must also report to SAFE if reasonable suspicion is formed that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected by another member, employee, or volunteer.

In response to any report to management concerning a member, employee or volunteer of this organisation, management may determine to take disciplinary action.

(Managing allegations of child abuse in sport and recreation. <http://ors.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/153564/child_abuse_allegations_guidelines_050115.pdf> )

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

1. **Strategies to minimise risk**

Policies and procedures may address (but are not limited to):

* + Transportation
	+ Taking images of children
	+ Supervision of children
	+ Child safety officer
	+ Complaints procedures
	+ Physical contact
	+ Responsibilities
	+ Procedure for breaches of policy
	+ Training\cyber safe guidelines
	+ Protecting privacy and confidentiality
	+ Procedures for dealing with situations where a member is being investigated for, or is charged with, a serious criminal offence.

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.

1. **Harassment/bullying**

SAFEopposes 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 the nominated SAFE Member Protection Officer (encompassing child safe environments) as noted on the SAFE website [www.safriendsandequines.weebly.com](http://www.safriendsandequines.weebly.com) or management.

1. **Communication**

SAFE 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, volunteers and parents (where appropriate) 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.

1. **Related policies and procedures**

***List related policies and procedures that support your child-safe policy.***

* + *Code of conduct*
	+ *Child Safe Policy listed on club website*
	+ *Membership application form is signed by members indicating they have read and will abide by this policy*
	+ *A range of general club management and governance policies are found on the club website*

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| Approved byPeta Wilson and Caroline Payne | Date25 October 2016 | Review date25 October 2018 |

**APPENDIX 1**

Conducting relevant history assessments

**Assessments required for prescribed positions**

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

Relevant history assessments are also required prior to the appointment of new employees or members to prescribed positions.

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

This requirement applies to all employees who regularly work with or around children in an unsupervised capacity or have access to prescribed records relating to children.

**Procedure for conducting relevant history assessments**

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| --- |
| *Note: The Children’s Protection Act 1993 enables organisations to decide the manner in which they will relevant history assessments.  Please choose the option below that reflects the method of assessment that your* *organisation has adopted.* |

**Other evidence (optional)**

Where appropriate, SAFE 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 DCSI Screening Unit letter

        A valid and current interstate working with children check.

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

SAFE 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.

APPENDIX 2

**Child Protection** **guidelines for employees and volunteers of** SAFE

Caring for children and young people brings additional responsibilities for employees and volunteers of this organisation.

All employees and volunteers of this organisation 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 this organisation’s child safe policy at all times.
* Listening and responding appropriately to the views and concerns of children and young people within the organisation.
* Taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people within the organisation.
* Ensuring children and young people understand their rights and explaining to the child in age-appropriate language what they can expect when participating in a service, activity or program offered by the organisation.
* 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 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/volunteers 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.