



Queensland Parachute Association **Working with Children** **2017**

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1 Statement Of Commitment

Queensland Parachute Association Inc, QPA, is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people and will endeavour to provide a safe and supportive service environment for children and young people by:

- treating them with respect and understanding and addressing their concerns at all times
- A strictly enforced code of conduct for staff and other volunteers;
- Clear dispute resolution mechanisms;
- A publicly available risk management policy.

In accordance with the [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#), QPA is required to have a written child and youth risk management strategy to protect the children and young people in our organisation from harm. The strategy will help ensure that QPA is a safe and supportive service environment for children and young people, by identifying and minimizing risks. Screening volunteers through the blue card system is part of the strategy.

QPA will make its Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy available to each of its member organisations and encourage them to use this as a basis for developing their own.

2 Code Of Conduct

All participants, including children and youths are required to comply with the Australian Parachute Federation's [code of ethics](#).

3 Selection Of Volunteers

QPA has in place an effective set of policies and procedures for selecting our staff and other volunteers. These processes ensure that QPA creates a safe and supportive environment for children and young people.

In order to become a volunteer for the organisation, individuals must be willing to work professionally and appropriately with children. As part of our processes, our Executive may question an instructor or volunteer to check their appropriateness for working with children.

4 Handling Disclosures And Suspicions of Harm

Definitions

Harm is defined under the *Child Protection Act 1999* (Qld) as “any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. For harm to be significant, the detrimental effect on the child’s wellbeing must be substantial or serious, more than transitory and must be demonstrable in the child’s presentation, functioning or behaviour”. Suspicion of harm occurs when an individual is concerned by significant changes in behaviour or the presence of new unexplained and suspicious injuries.

Harm may be categorised into the following types:

- Physical abuse, for example, beating, shaking, burning, biting, causing bruise or fractures by inappropriate discipline, giving children alcohol, drugs or inappropriate medication;
- Emotional or psychological abuse, for example, constant yelling, insults, swearing, criticism, bullying, not giving children positive support and encouragement;
- Neglect, for example, not giving children sufficient food, clothing, enough sleep, hygiene, medical care, leaving children alone or children missing school; and
- sexual abuse or exploitation, for example, sexual jokes or touching, exposing children to sexual acts or pornography or having sexual intercourse with a child or young person under 16 years of age (even if the child appears to have consented).

This policy applies to all QPA staff and volunteers. Staff and volunteers are aware of what to look for in relation to harm and handling of disclosures or suspicions of harm.

If our staff or volunteers have concerns about the safety of a child, they will record concerns in a non-judgmental and accurate manner as soon as possible. If a parent explains a noticeable mark on a child, they will record their own¹ observations as well as accurate details of the conversation. If they see unsafe or harmful actions towards a child in the QPA's care, they are instructed to intervene immediately, provided it is safe to do so. If it is unsafe, they will call the police for assistance.

QPA staff and volunteers are instructed as follows when they receive a disclosure of harm:

- remain calm and find a private place to talk
- don’t promise that you’ll keep a secret; tell them they have done the right thing in telling you but that you’ll need to tell someone who can help keep them safe
- only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report the matter; probing questions could cause distress, confusion and interfere with any later inquiries, and

- do not attempt to conduct your own investigation or mediate an outcome between the parties involved.

How To Submit A Disclosure Or Suspicion Of Harm

It is QPA policy that any instance be reported to the Administrator/Secretary of QPA by [telephone or email](#) and immediately to the appointed Volunteer-In-Charge at any event that the QPA runs.

An individual who reports an incident will be required to complete an incident report form which includes:

- Time, date and place of the disclosure;
- ‘Word for word’ what happened and what was said, including anything you said and any actions that have been taken;
- Date of report and signature.

5 Managing Breaches Of The Risk Management Strategy

A breach of the risk management strategy is any action or inaction by any member of QPA, including children and young people, that fails to comply with any part of QPA's child and youth risk management strategy.

However, a breach that results in significant harm to a child or young person as required by law will be considered in terms of an allegation or suspicion of harm in the first instance.

The following will occur if there is an allegation of a breach:

- The Executive shall appoint an investigation officer to oversee the process and advise the Executive;
- All people concerned will be advised of the process by the investigation officer;
- All people concerned will be able to provide their version of events to the investigation officer;
- The details of the breach, including the versions of all parties and the outcome will be recorded;
- The investigation officer will report to the Executive with recommendations for courses of action the Executive should take;
- The Executive will discuss between themselves and with the investigation officer the nature of the events.
- An appropriate outcome will be decided by the Executive.

All matters discussed in an investigation will be confidential.

Depending on the nature of the breach, outcomes may include:

- Emphasising the relevant component of the child and youth risk management strategy, for example, the code of conduct;
- Providing closer supervision;
- Further education and training;
- Mediating between those involved in the incident (where appropriate);
- Disciplinary procedures if necessary; or

- **Reviewing current policies and procedures and developing new policies and procedures if necessary.**

At this stage, QPA's Executive will undertake a full, confidential investigation. This may include the consultation of the Queensland Police or Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services for guidance. Depending on the outcome of that investigation, QPA may or may not report the incident to the Queensland Police.

Regardless of the outcome of the investigation, QPA will offer support and counselling to all parties involved. QPA will also review all policies and procedures relating to the handling of disclosures or suspicions of harm after an incident has occurred.

6 Procedures To Minimise Harm to Children And Young People

Our organisation works to minimise harm to children and young people by acting in a manner that supports their interests and wellbeing, by:

- **Making sure that children know that it is their right to feel safe at all times;**
- **Teaching them about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in general;**
- **Letting them know who is and who is not a volunteer in the organisation;**
- **Making sure they are safe by monitoring their activities and ensuring their environment meets all safety requirements;**
- **Taking anything a child or young person says seriously and following up their concerns;**
- **Letting them know there is no secret too awful, no story too terrible, that they can't share with someone they trust;**
- **Teaching them about appropriate and inappropriate contact in a manner appropriate to their age and level of understanding;**
- **Teaching children and young people to say 'no' to anything that makes them feel unsafe;**
- **Encouraging them to tell staff of any suspicious activities or people; and**
- **Listening to children and young people and letting them know that staff are available for them if they have any concerns.**

7 Compliance With Queensland Blue Card System

Version 3.0 Implementation date 1/4/16 requires that Unless otherwise exempt under a statute or order (as outlined below), all paid employees, who present for work to undertake child-related employment or activities, require a Blue Card if their duties include, or are likely to include, providing services directed mainly towards a child or children, or conducting activities that involve contact with children for at least:

- Eight consecutive days, or
- Once a week, each week, for over four weeks, or
- Once a fortnight, each fortnight, over eight weeks, or
- Once a month, each month, over six months.

Volunteers require a Blue Card prior to commencing child-related work or activities irrespective of the frequent of the work.

As all Skydive Instructors are paid for their Instruction we deem under this new legislation that Blue Cards are now no long required for our Industry and although working with Children is a critical part of our Instructor Training it is now not mandatory for Instructors to obtain this card.

We warn our volunteers that it is an offence for a 'disqualified person' to sign a blue card application or renewal form. A person is disqualified if they:

- have been convicted of a 'disqualifying offence'; or
- Are a 'reportable offender' with current reporting obligations under the [Child Protection \(Offender Reporting\) Act 2004 \(Qld\)](#); or
- Are subject to an offender prohibition order under the [Child Protection \(Offender Prohibition Order\) Act 2008 \(Qld\)](#); or
- Are subject to a sexual offender order under the [Dangerous Prisoners \(Sexual Offenders\) Act 2003 \(Qld\)](#); or
- Are subject to a disqualification order from a court prohibiting them from applying for or holding a blue card (see [Blue Card Services website](#) for further details of all the above).

8 Risk Management Plans For High Risk Activities And Special Events

As the sport of parachuting is generally regarded as a high risk activity and each training organisation is routinely subject to annual audits, there has been and continues to be strong commitment to risk minimisation. Each organisation is responsible for developing plans which address the specific issues for their locations.

9 Strategies For Communication And Support

This Child And Youth Risk Management Strategy is available publicly in order to ensure that all relevant stakeholders have access to it. Participants and supporters are informed of the policy at sign on and it is available on the web to access at any point.

Annual Review

The QPA Executive reviews our Child And Youth Risk Management Strategy annually. We invite any interested party to contact us if you have any information that may be useful for the review. The review considers:

- **Whether your policies and procedures were followed;**
- **Whether any incidents relating to children and young people's risk management issues occurred;**
- **The actual process used to manage any incidents;**
- **The effectiveness of your organisation's policies and procedures in preventing or minimising harm to children and young people; and**
- **The content and frequency of training in relation to your child and youth risk management strategy.**

Concerns With This Strategy

In order to improve our policies over time, the QPA's Executive is readily contactable for any issues relating to our Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy and processes. Any issues with our policy will be dealt with professionally and with the greatest priority.