

Policy	G.A.T.E.WAYS Child Safety Policy	Authorised
Published	2 June, 2021	Meg Pini (Director)
Review Date	2 June, 2024	

1. Purpose:

- 1.1 G.A.T.E.WAYS has a zero tolerance to child abuse. We are committed to promoting child safety and protecting *all* children who access our programs, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and those with a disability. This *Child Safety Policy* outlines our approach to creating an organisation that embeds the *Child Safe Standards*, so that children are safe and feel safe.
- 1.2 This policy is to ensure that all in the G.A.T.E.WAYS community understand the various legal and other reporting obligations related to child safety that apply to G.A.T.E.WAYS.

2. Scope:

- 2.1 This policy applies to all staff and contractors whether they work in direct contact with children or not. The policy applies to all settings where G.A.T.E.WAYS operates, including onsite venues where our programs run, online settings, and G.A.T.E.WAYS office spaces. It applies during and outside of our operational hours.
- 2.2 It applies to all G.A.T.E.WAYS staff aged under and over 18 years of age.

3. Definitions:

3.1 Child abuse

Child abuse includes:

- Any act committed against a child involving:
 - A sexual offence; or
 - Grooming
- The infliction, on a child, of:
 - Physical violence; or
 - Serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- Serious neglect of a child

3.2 Child

A *child* refers to anyone aged under 18 years who participates in our programs. The plural of *child* is *children*.

3.3 Contractor

A *contractor* refers to independent contractors who are not employees of G.A.T.E.WAYS but have been engaged through a sessional contract to develop and/or deliver programs onsite and/or online for children. They include members of other organisations contracted through G.A.T.E.WAYS to develop and/or deliver programs.

3.4 Employee

An *Employee* may or not have direct contact with children in the duties of their work. They include the Director, State Coordinators, Program Coordinators, Administration Staff, Digital Engagement Officer, Supervisors, and Convenors.

3.5 Staff

Staff encompasses *contractors* and *employees*. See definitions 3.3 and 3.4.

3.6 On-site

On-site refers to programs that take place in any physical space, including schools and any venue where G.A.T.E.WAYS operate.

3.7 Online

Online refers to programs that take place through any online platform.

Relevant legislation

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)
- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic.)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

4. Statement of commitment to child safety and child safe principles:

- 4.1 G.A.T.E.WAYS has a zero tolerance to child abuse. We are committed to promoting child safety and protecting *all* children who access our programs, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and those with a disability. We are committed to creating an organisation that embeds the *Child Safe Standards*, so that children are safe and feel safe. At G.A.T.E.WAYS, we place the child at the centre of every decision we make, ensuring that these value children's safety above all else.

We are committed to:

- The safety and well-being of all children who access our programs.
- Providing children with positive and nurturing experiences.
- Ensuring that our children are not exploited or harmed during our programs.
- Reporting any suspected cases of abuse.
- Ensuring our programs are culturally inclusive and respectful of alternative beliefs.

5. Strategies to ensure a child safe culture:

- 5.1 Child safety is everyone's responsibility. At G.A.T.E.WAYS, we take proactive measures to uphold child safety, including the following:

Before undertaking any work for G.A.T.E.WAYS

- All staff must agree to abide by our *Code of Conduct for Employees and Contractors*, outlining how they are to conduct themselves during the course of their duties. This also applies to staff who may not have direct contact with children.
- All staff who undertake work related to the development and delivery of online programs must agree to our *Code of Conduct for Employees and Contractors – Online*. This document further details how staff are to engage with children in online settings in a child safe manner.

- All staff must sign that they have read and will act in accordance with their legal obligations, including:
 - Failure to disclose offence (all adults)
 - Duty of care (all G.A.T.E.WAYS staff aged 18 and over)
 - Mandatory reporting obligations (applies to all mandatory reporters)
- All staff must agree to abide by the risk mitigation measures we outline in our *Risk Assessment Process* to uphold child safety.
- All staff must agree to abide by our *Photographs of Students Participating in G.A.T.E.WAYS Programs Policy* when photographing children in the course of their duties. They must handle, store, and destroy this data in accordance with that policy to uphold student safety and privacy.
- All staff are provided with and have agreed to follow our *Child Safe Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy*.
- This policy, and those mentioned within it, are reviewed every three years to ensure that they are up-to-date and reflect the risks and strategies G.A.T.E.WAYS undertakes to maintain a child safe environment.

6. Roles and responsibilities:

- 6.1 Child safety is everyone's responsibility.
- 6.2 The Director is responsible for ensuring that G.A.T.E.WAYS' policies and procedures are in accordance with state, territory, and federal legislation. They have a responsibility to ensure all staff comply with our policies and procedures.
- 6.3 State and Program Coordinators are responsible for ensuring the staff for which they are responsible comply with our policies and procedures.
- 6.4 In consultation with the Director, State and Program Coordinators are responsible for reviewing and updating our policies and procedures every three years.
- 6.5 G.A.T.E.WAYS staff are responsible for abiding by all of our policies and procedures.
- 6.6 All staff must abide by their legal obligations that extend beyond this *Child Safety Policy Document*.

7. Recruitment:

- 7.1 Under the terms of their agreement with G.A.T.E.WAYS, before they are engaged to undertake any work, they must declare that they have not:
 - Been found guilty by a Court of a sexual offence or an offence against a person (including a student or child).
 - Been dismissed retired or resigned from any previous employment or volunteer role following allegations that you were involved in improper conduct of a sexual or violent nature with a student or a child.
 - Been subject to any disciplinary procedure by your current or previous employer where the disciplinary sanction is still current.
 - Had action taken against you by any current or previous employer that may be relevant to your fitness to be employed in a school and to work with children.
 - Had action taken against you by any current or previous employer involving issues relating to the safety and welfare of children or young people.

- 7.2 Before undertaking any work, staff must provide a valid clearance for working with children in paid employment. This clearance must be accepted in the state or territory where they are undertaking work. These include but are not limited to a *Working with Children Check (Vic, NSW, SA)*, *Working with Vulnerable People Check (ACT)*, and *Blue Card (Qld)*.
- 7.3 Where staff are exempt, they must provide evidence of this exemption, for example, a valid *Victorian Institute of Teaching Registration Card*.

8. Training and supervision:

- 8.1 The Director, State Coordinators, Program Coordinators, and Administration Staff undergo annual professional development to inform them of their legal obligations, and processes and procedures for reporting child safety concerns to promote a culture of openness.
- 8.2 Staff for each program must attend a team meeting. In this meeting, Program Coordinators reiterate our shared responsibility to cultivate a child safe environment. They reiterate staff obligations that staff have agreed to abide by, including procedures for reporting concerns. Feedback is sought from staff and actioned.
- 8.3 All staff under 18 years of age are not left alone at any time with children attending our programs.

9. Reporting a child safety concern or complaint:

- 9.1 All staff are provided with and have agreed to follow our *Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy*. Our procedure is outlined in Appendix A of that policy document.
- 9.2 G.A.T.E.WAYS will follow the [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#) (Four Critical Actions) when responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse.
- 9.3 All staff who believe that a child is in need of protection, even if it doesn't meet the threshold required for mandatory reporting, should in the first instance speak to the Director of G.A.T.E.WAYS, or should make the required reports to the Child Protection Commission and/or state police as necessary.
- 9.4 Nothing in this policy, or our *Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy* prevents a staff member, or any other person, from reporting to the relevant authorities if they form a reasonable belief that a child is at risk of abuse.

10. Risk reduction and management:

10. As an organisation who works with children, we understand that we have an obligation to mitigate risks and prevent children from coming to harm On-site and Online.

We minimise risks by:

- Reviewing and updating our *Risk Management Assessment Process* annually to ensure that it reflects any changes to the risk profile of the work we undertake.
- Requiring every staff member who presents a program to carry out a detailed risk assessment to identify the risks inherent in the program, and strategies to mitigate these risks.

11. Listening to, communicating with and empowering children:

- 11.1 We believe that all children should feel safe and comfortable to report incidents that undermine their safety and/or that of others. At the beginning of each program, the supervisor reiterates that at any time, children are encouraged to bring concerns of any nature to G.A.T.E.WAYS staff.
- 11.2 In accordance with best practice and our *Child Safe Reporting and Obligations Policy*, staff will seek input from students and families and keep them informed during the process when dealing with allegations of misconduct.

12. Communication:

- 12.1 This policy and our *Child Safe Standards Commitment* are published on our website, and we welcome feedback at any time on how we can improve our policy to enhance child safety.

13. Confidentiality and privacy:

- 13.3 G.A.T.E.WAYS collects, uses, and stores data about children in accordance with the *Privacy Policy* on our website.
- 13.4 At the conclusion of each program, G.A.T.E.WAYS destroys all printed information, including but not limited to, student rolls, anaphylaxis and asthma action plans, and medical notes.

14. Related policies and documents:

- 14.1 Related policies include:
- *Code of Conduct for Employees and Contractors*
 - *Code of Conduct for Employees and Contractors – Online*
 - *Child Safety Code of Conduct*
 - *G.A.T.E.WAYS and the Reportable Conduct Scheme*
 - *Photographs of Students Participating in G.A.T.E.WAYS Programs Policy*
 - *Child Safe Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy*
 - *Risk Management Process*
 - *Child Safe Standards Commitment*
 - *Anaphylaxis Management Policy*
 - *Parent Attendance Policy*

15. Policy evaluation and review:

- 15.1 To ensure continual improvement, this policy will be reviewed every three years.