

NMA

**/ TRAINING
ACADEMY**

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Child Protection Policy	1
Child Protection	3
Scope and application	3
Relevant legislation	3
Staff recruitment and screening	3
Behavioural guidelines	5
Child Protection Procedures	5
Initial Response	6
Taking action.....	7
Important Phone Contacts	9
Sources of information	9
Version Control	10

Child Protection

All students under eighteen (18) years of age who are supported by MA Training Academy have a right to feel and be safe. MA Training Academy have a responsibility to the children and families of those children who come into touch with our staff to ensure that they are safe from any form of abuse. Staff, students, and other representatives of MA Training Academy have a legal, moral, and ethical obligation to safeguard these children and to take action when they believe it is necessary.

Scope and application

This policy is applicable to all MA Training Academy staff, management, students and contractors.

Relevant legislation

The following legislation applies in the Commonwealth, State, and Territory jurisdictions where we operate due to the nature of the services, we provide in delivering training nationally:

- Commonwealth - Family Law Act 1975 and Child Protection Act 1999
- New South Wales - The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Victoria - Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 and The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- Queensland - Child Protection Act 1999 and Commission for Children and Young People Act 2000
- Western Australia - Children and Community Services Act 2004, Family Court Act 1997, Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012
- South Australia - Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017
- Tasmania - Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997
- Australian Capital Territory - Children and Young People Act 2008
- Northern Territory - Care and Protection of Children Act 2007

Staff recruitment and screening

MA Training Academy takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with our students. We employ a range of screening measures and apply best practice 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. Criminal history assessments are required for anyone within our organisation that:

- has regular contact with young people and is not directly supervised at all times;
- works in close proximity to young people on a regular basis and is not directly supervised at all times; or
- supervises or manages persons who:
 - have regular contact with young people or
 - work in close proximity to young people on a regular basis; or
- has access to sensitive records relating to young people.

Exemptions from this requirement may apply in some circumstances.

Working with children checks

All MA Training Academy personnel are required to undertake, as a component of the recruitment process, a **National Criminal Check** to ensure suitability in meeting MA Training Academy’s legislative and contractual obligations. National criminal checks are valid for and must be renewed every three years.

www.nationalcrimecheck.com.au

In addition to the above national check, all personnel providing services in Victoria must undertake a Victorian "**Working with Children**" check as a component of the recruitment process, in line with the Working with Children Act 2005 (VIC). Checks are valid for five years.

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>

Student entry requirements (age)

MA Training Academy asserts a general minimum age policy for course applicants, unless specified in the specific course entry requirements as it may relate to licencing or specific legislation the following applies.

Age	Procedure
18 and over 18 years of age	Enrol per standard enrolment procedure
17 years of age	Enrol per standard enrolment procedure A parent or guardian must complete the Parent or Guardian Consent Form
14 - 16 years of age	A verification call from the CEO will occur to determine suitability for the course prior to enrolment Enrol per standard enrolment procedure A parent or guardian must complete the Parent or Guardian Consent Form
Under 14 years of age	May not enrol

All students under 18 years of age who are training with MA Training Academy have a right to feel and be safe. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered; MA Training Academy supports and respects all children and is committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

Behavioural guidelines

MA Training Academy staff will:

- Treat every child with dignity and respect regardless of individual differences;
- Conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their position as a representative of our organisation;
- Immediately raise any concerns for the safety or wellbeing of a child in accordance with our reporting procedures (see next section);
- Listen to children, take their concerns seriously and allow them to have a say in the decisions that affect them; and
- Avoid being alone with children and ensure that other adults are present when working around children.

MA Training Academy staff will not:

- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or language with children;
- Discriminate based on age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability or sexuality;
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves;
- Develop 'special' relationships with specific children for their own needs;
- Show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention; and
- Have contact with children outside of MA Training Academy duties.

By observing these standards all personnel acknowledge individual responsibility to immediately report any breach of these behavioural guidelines to the Child Safety Officer and MA Training Academy management.

Child Protection Procedures

Reporting child abuse is a community-side responsibility. Child abuse includes any act committed against a child involving

- Physical violence
- Sexual offences
- Serious emotional or psychological abuse; and
- Serious neglect

All MA Training Academy personnel are required to report to police if they know or reasonably believe that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16. It is a criminal offence (failure to disclose) to fail to comply with this obligation across jurisdictions.

How to recognise abuse in children

The following are some of the most common signs of child abuse and neglect. It should be highlighted that the existence of one or more of these symptoms does not automatically imply child abuse, but it may serve as a warning sign.

- A child or young person tells you that he or she is being abused or hurt.

- You notice sudden or unexplained changes in the mood or behaviour of a child or young person.
- You notice frequent or unexplained bruises or injuries on a child or young person.
- You see a child or young person with low self-esteem.
- You see a child or young person with poor hygiene.
- You notice that a child or young person becomes withdrawn or unresponsive.
- You notice a child or young person with a lot of exaggerated fears.
- You notice that a child or young person seems to lack trust in familiar adults.
- You notice that a child or young person has serious difficulties relating to peers and/or adults.
- You see a child or young person who is always angry or aggressive.
- You find out that a child or young person has difficulty sleeping and experiences nightmares.
- You notice a child or young person experience a change in eating patterns.

Child Safety Officer

MA Training has appointed a child safety officer for its RTO operations, being the designated person to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns and providing support to other personnel.

Child Safety Officer:

- Fiona McLean, General Manager, 0413 221 593, fmclean@maservicesgroup.com.au

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

In response to any report to the concerning a member, or employee of this organisation, disciplinary action will be taken.

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

Initial Response

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be personnel, parents, or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. MA Training Academy has safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

If a child discloses an incident of abuse

- Try and separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully.
- Let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred.
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.
- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people in your organisation, or the police.
- Do not make promises to the child such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe.
- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.

If a parent/carer says their child has been abused or raises a concern

- Explain that MA Training Academy has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously.
- Ask about the wellbeing of the child.
- Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words.
- Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details.
- Explain to them the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as the MA Training Academy management or Child Safety Officer, the police or child protection.
- Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together.
- Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.
- Ensure the report is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.
- Be aware that:
 - Individuals from Aboriginal, culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse.
 - Individuals with a disability may experience barriers disclosing an incident.

Personnel must follow the actions below every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

If personnel believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing they must still act.

Taking action

MA Training Academy play a critical role in protecting children in our care. Personnel must act by following the actions below as soon as you witness and incident, receive a disclosure, or form a reasonable belief that a child has or is at risk of being abused.

You must act if you form a suspicion/reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse and you must use an incident report form to keep clear and comprehensive notes.

ACTION 1 – Responding to an emergency

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to ACTION 2.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:

- Separating alleged victims and others involved.
- Administering first aid.
- Calling 000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance to respond to immediate health or safety concerns.
- Identifying a contact person in your organisation for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

ACTION 2 – Reporting to authorities

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you must report all incidents, suspicions, and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

You must report all instances of suspected child abuse or suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Police.

You must also report internally to the Child Safety Officer and MA Training Academy management.

If the source of suspected abuse is from within the family or community, you must report the suspected abuse to the relevant Child Protection Authority in the State or Territory jurisdiction.

This includes if a child is considered to be:

- In need of protection from child abuse
- At risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability, or development.

ACTION 3 – Contacting parents / Carers

The Child Safety Officer and MA Training Academy management must consult with Child Protection and / or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:

Not to contact the parents/carers (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parents/carers to be contacted); or

To contact the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion).

ACTION 4 – Provide ongoing support

Stirling Institute must provide support for children impacted by abuse. This includes the development of a Student Support Plan developed in consultation with wellbeing professional and/or counselling staff.

Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals.

Reporting procedure

When contacting appropriate child protection authorities, the child protection worker will ask you for certain information, including:

- Details - the child's or young person's name, age and where you encounter them.
- Indicators of harm - the reason for believing that the injury or behaviour is the result of abuse or neglect.
- Reason for reporting - the reason why the call is being made now.
- Safety assessment - assessment of immediate danger to the child or children.
- Description - Description of the injury or behaviour observed.
- Child's whereabouts - the current whereabouts of the child or young person if known.
- Cultural characteristics - any specific cultural or other details which will help to care for the child - for example, Aboriginality, interpreter or disability needs.

Please note - a notification should still be made, even if you don't have all the information listed above.

Important Phone Contacts

- Tasmania - Child Protection Advice and Referral Service 1300 737 639
- Victoria - Child Protection Crisis Line: 13 12 78
- New South Wales - Department of Community Services Helpline: 13 21 11
- Australian Capital Territory - Family Services: 02 6207 1069
- South Australia - Child Abuse Report Line: 13 14 78
- Western Australia - Family Helpline: 08 9223 1100
- Queensland -Community Child Health Service: 07 3862 2333
- Northern Territory - Child Abuse Reporting Hotline: 1800 700 250

Sources of information

- Australian Childhood Foundation: www.childhood.org.au
- Kids Helpline: www.kidshelp.com.au
- National Child Protection Clearinghouse: www.aifs.gov.au
- National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN): www.napcan.org.au

Version Control

Version No.	Date Reviewed	Approved By	Summary of Changes	Next Reviewed
1.0	31/01/2022	Fiona Mclean, General Manager	Change of Management and documents created.	31/01/2023