

Policy Number: **G14.1**

Policy Title: **Governance
Child Protection Guidelines**



Date of First Adoption: September 2009

Date of Amendment: May 2015

Date of Next Review: September 2018

Introduction

- The following practices are designed to maximise the ability of staff, volunteers, and visiting teams to protect children and young people (any person under 18 years). Adults have a joint responsibility to prevent any breach of trust towards children or young people.
- Every person working with children must follow these guidelines to ensure good practice and avoid misinterpretation of actions.

I, _____ have read and understand GMP's Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Code of Conduct. I agree that in the course of my association with GMP I will:

General:

- Treat all children with respect, taking notice of their reactions to tone of voice and manner.
- Ensure I am never left alone with a child or young person of either gender, no matter what their age. Conduct counselling within sight of other team members.
- Maintain strict segregation of sleeping quarters when staying overnight. Rooms/areas will be supervised by a person of the same gender as the children or young people in them. Under no circumstances will I share accommodation with only one child or young person.
- Not wear provocative or revealing attire.
- Use social media, computers, mobile phones and cameras appropriately, and never to exploit or harass children or to access child exploitation material.
- Comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation including labour laws in relation to child labour.
- Not employ children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate for their developmental stage, or which interferes with their time for education and recreation, or which places them at significant risk of injury.

Specific areas:

1. Behaviour and Language

- Be sensitive to those from different cultures and traditions.
- Not use language or behaviour that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- Not engage in behaviour that gives the impression of favouritism or encourages 'special' relationships with individual children or young people.
- Not engage in sexual behaviour of any kind towards children, including suggestive language or behaviour.

2. First Aid

- Consider safety issues and minimise risks as a part of the preparation of any programme.
- Cooperate with the designated lead First- Aider and not administer First Aid in private. If possible, only treat patients of my own gender.
- If an injury requires private assistance, work with another First-Aider and document the treatment.
- Inform parents/guardians of any injury and medical assistance sought/given.

3. Activities and games

- Use only material (e.g., videos, pictures, songs, plays) consistent with the values of these guidelines.
- Not engage in rough physical games with children.
- Ensure an environment of respect towards the privacy of others during the activities that require undressing, dressing or changing clothes.
- Set an example by protecting my own privacy in these situations.
- Not condone or take part in nude swimming or other nude activities. Not condone or take part in exploitation of gender, physical or intellectual differences.

4. Physical Contact

- Touch children only in appropriate and culturally sensitive ways. Relatively 'safe touch' areas are elbow, shoulder, hand or upper back.
- Not initiate close physical contact with children or young people. There will be occasions where displays of affection are natural and I will not shun children if they initiate and demonstrate their need for comfort, bearing in mind the age of the child and the circumstances. For example with 12-18 year-olds I will employ a side-hug' technique.
- Not administer any form of corporal punishment, even in fun. I will use physical restraint only as appropriate to protect children or young people from harm. (e.g., reasonable restraint to stop a fight; to stop bullying; to avoid an accident.)

5. Travel in private vehicles

- Transport children or young people only if I have a full licence (not provisional) and permission from children's parent/guardian. Endeavour to have at least one additional passenger when transporting a child.

6. Media

- Endeavour to comply with local traditions regarding taking and reproducing personal images
- Ensure any photos or videos present children in a respectful way and not demean or sexualise the child.
- Indicate the intended use of the photo and obtain informed consent from children, and the parent or guardian if they are available, before publishing any image. Where a child is of mature understanding and no parent/guardian is available, the child's informed consent is sufficient.

7. Reporting

- Immediately inform GMP if I am charged with, arrested for or convicted of criminal offences relating to child exploitation or abuse.
- Promptly report any of the following:
 - a. Any observation of behaviour that breaches these guidelines.
 - b. Any disclosure or allegation from a child, community member, staff or other regarding the safety, abuse, discrimination or exploitation of a child.
 - c. Any accident or injury to a child involved in a GMP-supported activity
 - d. Any organisational or programmatic issues, plans or strategies that may lead to child protection concerns.
- Use incident report form (G14.2) for any accident or alleged incident of abuse, exploitation or breach of these guidelines. In Australia I will submit the form to the Executive Officer, while overseas to the Country Director of the partner agency and the Team Leader.
- Use Risk Register Lodgement (G13.1) for any organisational issues that may lead to child protection concerns, submitting it to the Executive Officer.