

Capricorn Citizen Advocacy

CHILD AND YOUTH RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Policy number:	1.3.4.2	Approved by Management Committee:	4 th April 2017
Version:	1.0	Signed off by Executive:	4 th April 2017
Responsible person:	Coordinator	Scheduled Review Date:	4 th April 2020

Purpose

In accordance with the Queensland Government's *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011*, Capricorn Citizen Advocacy is a 'regulated organisation'. This document sets out how Capricorn Citizen Advocacy is complying with its obligations to develop and implement a Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy and how our organisation also ensures its ongoing compliance with the blue card system.

Capricorn Citizen Advocacy promotes child-safe and child-friendly environments by implementing strategies that identify and minimise the risk of harm. This document addresses the eight mandatory requirements of a child and youth risk management strategy and should be read in conjunction as necessary with other policies and procedures adopted by Capricorn Citizen Advocacy as follows;

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| 1. Policy 1.1.5 | <i>Code of Conduct – Committee of Management</i> |
| 2. Policy 1.3.4 | <i>Risk Management Framework</i> |
| 3. Procedure 1.3.4.1 | <i>Risk Management Plan and Risk Register</i> |
| 4. Procedure 1.3.4.3 | <i>Handling Disclosures or Suspicions of Harm, including Reporting.</i> |
| 5. Policy 4.6.0 | <i>Criminal History Screening Policy</i> |
| 6. Procedure 4.6.0.1 | <i>Criminal History Screening Procedure.</i> |
| 7. Policy 6.0.0 | <i>Code of Conduct – Staff and Volunteers</i> |
| 8. Policy 6.3.0 | <i>Staff Recruitment and Employment Policy</i> |
| 9. Policy 6.6.0 | <i>Staff Training Policy</i> |

Policy

1. Statement of Commitment

Capricorn Citizen Advocacy is committed to promoting, protecting and defending the personal well being and interests of vulnerable children and young people with disabilities who have unmet needs, and limited means to have those needs addressed.

We are committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing and protection of all children and young people from harm and will endeavour to provide a safe and supportive environment for them by enhancing and maintaining their identities and roles as human beings, growing and developing persons, and citizens.

In order to reflect this commitment, we establish and support a range of individualised, unpaid personal relationships between such children and young people (Protégés) and valued, competent citizens (Citizen Advocates). Advocates are prepared to facilitate appropriate support for, and to undertake committed and sustained relationships with, the child or young person based upon the representation of their best interests.

The following beliefs reflect the culture that we are committed to promoting within our organisation;

1. In their own behaviour with people with disability, and in speaking about them, the Management Committee and staff will model respect and dignity towards people with disabilities.
2. We will consciously avoid associating people with disability with images, places or actions which confer or have the potential to confer negative and devaluing images and interpretations of people with disability.
3. We believe that people with disability have the right to hold valued roles in society and fulfil the responsibilities associated with these roles.
4. We believe that people with disability have the right to participate as active and valued members in the community, to have lifestyles which are valued by the community, and to be offered the most conducive opportunities to do so.
5. We believe that making a one to one relationship between a valued unpaid citizen, who makes a voluntary commitment to stand by and represent the interests of a person with disability, is through positive association, a valid way of promoting the valued status of people with disability.

2. Code of Conduct - Child and Youth Risk Management

Capricorn Citizen Advocacy has separate Codes of Conduct for its Management Committee; [1.1.5 Code of Conduct – Committee of Management](#) and its staff and volunteers; [6.0.0 Code of Conduct – Staff and Volunteers](#). These Codes of Conduct do not specifically address interactions with children and young people and a separate Code of Conduct is set out below.

As Capricorn Citizen Advocacy is not a service provider organisation which employs staff and volunteers delivering services at various premises, several areas of interaction between the organisation and children and young people addressed in the [Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy Toolkit](#) also do not apply, as set out below;

1. Behaviour management strategies
2. Supervision of children and young people
3. Visitor and spectator policies
4. Use of technology and social media
5. Substance use including: smoking and use of alcohol, other drugs and medications
6. Health and Safety
 - emergency and evacuation procedures
 - regular checking of the physical premises and equipment safety checks

Other areas of interaction covered in the [Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy Toolkit](#) are relevant to Capricorn Citizen Advocacy's Management Committee and staff and volunteers. These are set out below as a separate Code of Conduct;

Child and Youth Risk Management Code of Conduct

1. Appropriate and Inappropriate Language

Appropriate language must always be used by Management Committee and staff and volunteers with children and young people; this includes always addressing them with respect, by name and in a friendly, open manner. The tone used must not direct their responses and must demonstrate an engaging and listening approach.

Inappropriate language that must not be used at any time includes use of name calling, insults, yelling, swearing and language designed to deliberately harm a child's or young person's self respect and confidence.

2. Appropriate and Inappropriate Physical contact

In limited circumstances, it can be appropriate for Management Committee, staff and volunteers to have physical contact with a child, e.g:

- injury management
- to demonstrate a skill or for instructional purposes as part of an activity, or
- to assist with toileting of young children.

Good practice dictates that Management Committee, staff and volunteers will provide an explanation to a child or young person about what physical contact will occur and why it will occur.

Inappropriate physical contact by Management Committee, staff and volunteers includes,

- violent or aggressive behaviour such as hitting, kicking, slapping or pushing
- kissing, or
- touching of a sexual nature.

3. One-on-one Contact and Relationships with Children

Good practice dictates that when Management Committee, staff and volunteers have one-on-one contacts with children and young people, they try to ensure the child and adult are visible to others.

Management Committee, staff and volunteers must not have contact with children on social media or mobile phone.

It is appropriate for Management Committee, staff and volunteers to give children and young person a gift of no greater value than \$20. This should be restricted to special occasions such as birthdays, Christmas and graduations.

4. Transportation of Children

When transportation of children is required by Management Committee, staff and volunteers, parental (or carer's) consent must be sought; drivers must be licensed; vehicles must be registered and insured and child restraints/car seats are available and, if required, properly fitted.

5. Change Rooms and Toilets

Good practice dictates that Management Committee, staff and volunteers should balance the need for supervision and privacy for children and young people.

- Adults must announce entry to the room before entering.
- Adults are not to be in change rooms with children without another person present.

6. Health and safety

When interacting with children and young people; Management Committee, staff and volunteers must always be mindful and proactive of meeting their responsibilities regarding;

- children's needs for sleep and rest
- child hygiene
- sun safety
- water safety

7. Managing injuries or illnesses

Management Committee, staff and volunteers must be active in managing injuries and illnesses of children and young people in their care. This includes be able to provide;

- procedures for first aid
- adequate supervision of a child who is sick or injured, and
- relevant notifications to parents or carers

8. Photography

Management Committee, staff and volunteers must obtain parental or carer's consent in relation to photographing children and young people. See [Form 4 1 0 2 - Photographic Consent Form](#).

Written agreement must be obtained from parents or carers regarding;

- the use of photographs (including on social media), including publication of photographs of a child or young person,
- provision of identifying information about a child

Children must be appropriately clothed and photos must be appropriate for the child's age.

9. Confidentiality and Privacy

Management Committee, staff and volunteers are expected to respect the confidentiality of all information held by Capricorn Citizen Advocacy about children and young people, including any breaches of our child and youth risk management strategy and information about disclosures or suspicions of harm.

See also;

- [4.1.0 Confidentiality Safeguards Policy](#)
- [4.1.0.2 Photographic Consent Form](#)
- [4.2.0 Privacy Policy](#)

3. Recruitment, Selection, Training and Management

Capricorn Citizen Advocacy has written procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing its staff and volunteers. See [Policy 6.3.0 - Staff Recruitment and Employment Policy](#) and [Policy 6.6.0 - Staff Training Policy](#).

Pre-Employment

Capricorn Citizen Advocacy has suitable pre-appointment processes which allow it to identify and recruit someone who has the skills and attributes to fulfil the role requirements.

- Our position descriptions detail the duties, tasks, skills and experience needed by our staff and volunteers including expectations for staff to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and young people;
- Our selection criteria assess commitment, understandings, attributes, attitudes and values required of the position, particularly as they relate to children.
- When advertising a position, we are clear about our commitment to provide a safe and supportive service environment for children and young people. Applicants are informed they are going to be subjected to blue card screening and referee checks and we request that they disclose any information relevant to their eligibility to engage in activities involving children and young people.

Selection

When recruiting new staff or volunteers, our assessment is based on the position description we developed for the role. Our aim is to recruit someone who has the skills and attributes to fulfil the role requirements, or someone who, with a little extra training, can acquire the skills.

- Interviews - we explore applicants' backgrounds, work history, skills and values, and evaluate their suitability to work with children and young people; using: scenario type questions that explore how an applicant might behave in employment-related situations, open ended questions that allow the applicant to provide detailed answers, and probing questions which ask applicants to elaborate on the answers that they have provided to previously asked questions.
- Referee checks – we complete reference checks with most recent employer to verify the identity of prospective employee, the details of previous employment, and suitability of individual to work with children and young people.

Post Appointment

- Training – we undertake assessments of the specific risks and training needs relevant to our environment, identify mandatory training to all staff, specify how frequently it should occur and maintain a register of who has completed what training.

- Management – we ensure our policies and procedures support and encourage safe and supportive environments for children and young people. We promote and demonstrate respect for the rights and expectations of children and young people, parents and carers.

Management practices include professional development and performance appraisals, regularly reviewing skill sets of staff, identifying training needs and setting goals regarding issues that impact on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

- Exit interviews or questionnaires – we gather information during an exit interview or questionnaire process to assist our organisation to identify broader issues of concern that may impact on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

4. Handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines

Capricorn Citizen Advocacy has a written procedure to ensure staff and volunteers respond as quickly as possible to a disclosure or suspicion of harm to a child or young person. See [*1.3.4.3 Handling Disclosures or Suspicions of Harm, including Reporting Procedure.*](#)

5. Plan for Managing Breaches of our Risk Management Strategy

Capricorn Citizen Advocacy's plan for managing any action or inaction by a person in our organisation that fails to comply with the policy and procedure which make up our risk management strategy is set out below.

The plan allows our organisation to manage any potential breaches in a fair and supportive manner. Without a plan:

- people may not be clear on their obligations and rights and therefore may be hesitant to report breaches
- appropriate consequences for breaches may not be enforced due to confusion about what course of action to take
- similar breaches may be dealt with inconsistently which may result in repeat offences and also a lack of confidence in the risk management strategy, and
- opportunities for training and improvement will be more difficult to identify.

Definition of a Breach

A breach is any action or inaction by any member of the organisation that fails to comply with any part of the strategy.

Who must comply with the plan?

Our risk management strategy applies to all of our employees and volunteers, including Citizen Advocates and Management Committee.

Responsibilities and Delegations

The person responsible for the management of breaches is the Coordinator or the President of the Management Committee or the President's delegate.

Processes for Reporting Breaches

When reporting breaches of the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy, employees and volunteers should deal either with the Coordinator or the President of the Management Committee.

The report must be in writing and provide adequate details of the alleged breach to allow it to be investigated.

Outcomes of Breaches (examples)

1. Breach of the Code of Conduct – consequences could be disciplinary action
2. Failure to update blue card contact information – further training could be required

After investigation of breaches, proportionate outcomes may include:

- emphasising the relevant component of the child and youth risk management strategy, for example, the code of conduct
- providing closer supervision
- providing further education and training
- mediating between those involved in the incident (where appropriate)
- disciplinary procedures (if necessary)
- reviewing current policies and procedures, and
- developing new policies and procedures (if necessary).

6. Risk Management Plans for High Risk Activities and Special Events

Capricorn Citizen Advocacy believes that this section of a Child and Youth Risk Management strategy does not apply to our organisation.

We have considered the possibilities and are certain this section does not apply to the activities we undertake in our organisation.

7. Compliance with the Queensland Blue Card System

Our organisation complies with the Blue Card system in Queensland, we maintain a register of the blue card status of our staff and volunteers and we review at least annually, our child and youth risk management strategy.

Capricorn Citizen Advocacy keeps a spreadsheet which records all details of Blue Cards and Yellow Cards for employees and volunteers (including Citizen Advocates and Management Committee members) and a copy of correspondence and ID verification for each person who has a Blue Card.

By ensuring that we comply with our legislative requirements under the blue card system, we demonstrate to our stakeholders we are committed to maintaining a safe and supportive environment for children and young people.

Risk Management Requirements

Our annual review of our child and youth risk management strategy considers:

- whether our 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 our 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 our child and youth risk management strategy.

Blue Card Screening Requirements

Our organisation specifically addresses:

Identification of who requires a Blue Card or Exemption Card.

We cannot make it a compulsory requirement for volunteers to hold a card unless they are providing child-related services that are regulated by the Act, however, we always ask all of our advocates to apply for a Blue Card. See [4.6.0 Criminal History Screening Policy](#) and [4.6.0.1 Criminal History Screening Procedure](#).

Nomination of a Contact Person

The designated contact person for Capricorn Citizen Advocacy responsible for managing blue cards and exemption cards is the Coordinator. In practice the Administration Officer handles the day to day responsibilities. The Coordinator is the person who Blue Card Services will send all notifications to and is the only person who Blue Card Services can discuss the person's Blue Card status with unless additional authorisation is provided.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

- We notify all applicants that by signing the application form they are consenting to the screening process.
- We certify that the 'contact person' or delegate has sighted documents to confirm an employee's identity as prescribed under the Act.
- We carefully check through the application form to ensure all sections have been appropriately completed.
- We are aware that while paid employees can commence employment after an application form has been submitted, volunteers and trainee students must not commence regulated employment until they hold a valid blue card and positive notice.
- We explicitly warn potential staff (paid employees, volunteers and students) that it is an offence for a 'disqualified person' to sign a blue card application form or a renewal form. **It is an offence for us not to provide this warning.**

Managing Existing Blue Card Holders

1. If a person joins our organisation and already has a blue card, we ensure that we;

- Verify the validity of the blue card, AND if the person holds a paid blue card
- Lodge an Authorisation to confirm a valid card/application form with Blue Card Services.

This ensures we receive important notifications in relation to the blue card holder, including that the card has been cancelled or suspended.

2. If the person holds a volunteer blue card and will be undertaking paid employment with our organisation we;

- Lodge a Volunteer to paid transfer form with Blue Card Services. This will transfer their card from volunteer to paid status and will ensure we receive important notifications in relation to the blue card holder, including that the card has been cancelled or suspended.

3. If the person holds a volunteer blue card and will be undertaking voluntary employment with our organisation we:

- Lodge an Authorisation to confirm a valid card/application form with Blue Card Services. This will ensure we receive important notifications in relation to the blue card holder, including that the card has been cancelled or suspended.

4. If a person ceases working with us we lodge an Applicant/cardholder no longer with organisation (for organisations) form to advise Blue Card Services immediately.

Managing Changes in Police Information

We ensure that individuals understand their obligation to advise us if there is a change in their police information. Our employees/volunteers are not required to disclose the specific nature of the change, only that a change has occurred, and

We have processes in place to ensure that a Change in Police Information Notification is submitted to Blue Card Services if we receive notification that there is a change in the person's police information.

Employee Register

As part of our Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy, our organisation maintains an employee register which is a written record or register of all paid employees and volunteers involved in child-related activities within our organisation.

We have procedures for maintaining a register in either electronic or hard copy format.

If employees or volunteers join our organisation with a blue card, we confirm that the card is valid. We maintain a written record of all employees within our organisation which includes:

1. whether or not the person requires a blue/exemption card (if not, why not – e.g. an exemption applies under the Act)
2. the type of application/blue card (e.g. paid or volunteer) or exemption card
3. when the person applied and/or the date of issue of the positive notice and blue/exemption card
4. the blue card/exemption card number and the expiry date of the blue card, and
5. the renewal date.

TIPS

- If volunteers apply at least 30 days before their blue card expires, it allows them to continue working in child-related employment, even if their blue card expires before a new card is issued.
- Paid employees must submit a renewal application before the expiry date of their blue card to continue working in regulated child-related employment once their application has been lodged.

We ensure appropriate and confidential records in relation to the following are maintained:

- whether a negative notice has been issued
- any change in status to a blue/exemption card or exemption card (such as a change in police information, or the cancellation or suspension of a blue/exemption card)
- where there is a change in police information, the date we informed Blue Card Services of the change
- where an employee leaves our organisation and the date we informed Blue Card Services, and

- any change to the employee's/volunteer's personal information, including the date they informed Blue Card Services

8. Communication and Support

Our organisation has the following strategies for communication of our risk management strategy and support:

- written information for parents, employees and volunteers that includes details of our organisation's risk management strategy or where the strategy can be accessed; and
- training materials for employees and volunteers which;
 - help identify risks of harm and how to handle disclosures or suspicions of harm; and
 - outline our organisation's risk management strategy.

Our child and youth risk management strategy will be most effective when it has been successfully communicated to all people involved with our organisation. We value a culture which recognises and values the importance of upholding safeguards for children.

An effective strategy for communication and support;

- ensures that all people in our organisation are aware of their responsibilities and understand what is acceptable behaviour for interacting with children
- enables people to feel comfortable addressing issues of concern
- highlights the importance of our organisation's commitment to protecting the safety and wellbeing of children in our service environment, and
- reduces the likelihood of breaches of our risk management strategy.

COMMUNICATION IDEAS

- Provide a compulsory induction covering the risk management policies and procedures for all paid employees and volunteers
- Deliver regular information sessions for people involved with our organisation in relation to our risk management strategy
- Provide information about the various policies and procedures in our newsletter
- Schedule regular and mandatory training for staff in relation to our policy and procedures which make up our strategy, with a focus on managing disclosures or suspicions of harm
- Provide relevant individuals with information to understand their obligations as a Blue Card holder. Information sheets are available on the Blue Card Services website.

Related Documents

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| 1. Policy 1.0.0 | Vision, Mission and Principles |
| 2. Policy 1.1.5 | Code of Conduct – Committee of Management |
| 3. Policy 1.3.4 | Risk Management Framework |
| 4. Procedure 1.3.4.1 | Risk Management Plan and Risk Register |
| 5. Procedure 1.3.4.3 | Handling Disclosures or Suspicions of Harm, including Reporting. |
| 6. Policy 4.1.0 | Confidentiality Safeguards Policy |
| 7. Form 4 1 0 2 | Photographic Consent Form |
| 8. Policy 4.2.0 | Privacy Policy |
| 9. Policy 4.6.0 | Criminal History Screening Policy |
| 10. Procedure 4.6.0.1 | Criminal History Screening Procedure. |
| 11. Policy 6.0.0 | Code of Conduct – Staff and Volunteers |
| 12. Policy 6.3.0 | Staff Recruitment and Employment Policy |
| 13. Policy 6.6.0 | Staff Training Policy |

References

1. Child Protection Act 1999
2. Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000
3. Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011
4. Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy - Toolkit (Queensland Government)
5. Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy - Self Assessment Checklist
6. Blue Card Services website: www.bluecard.qld.gov.au
7. Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services:
www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety

Ratification

This strategy was adopted by Capricorn Citizen Advocacy's Management Committee at its meeting held on 04 / 04 / 2017.

SIGNED:

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President

4 / 4 / 17
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(Date)

SIGNED:

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Secretary

6 / 4 / 17
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(Date)

