

TITLE:	Child Safety Policy
RESPONSIBILITY:	Ryde Hunters Hill Life Education Centre Inc.
DATE LAST REVIEWED:	July 2025
NEXT REVISION DATE:	July 2026
DRAFTED BY:	Life Education NSW Chief Operating Officer
APPROVAL:	Board of Directors for Ryde Hunters Hill Life Education Centre Inc.

Our Commitment to Child Safety

At **Ryde Hunters Hill Life Education Centre Inc.** (RHH Life Ed) we commit to the safety and wellbeing of every child and young person with whom we work. Please read our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, which is available online and is displayed in all our mobile learning classrooms and our Head Office, located at 7 Maxim Street, West Ryde NSW 2114.

Our organisation ensures services and activities are inclusive of all children and young people, including children and young people with diverse needs.

Everyone working with RHH Life Ed is responsible for protecting children and reporting any suspected abuse.

This Policy applies to all RHH Life Ed Representatives and describes what is required from all staff and volunteers in the organisation when taking part in any activities, services and events that involve children and young people.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Prevent child abuse within RHH Life Ed.
- Build a culture of child safety in RHH Life Ed.
- Ensure all RHH Life Ed Representatives understand their responsibilities to recognise, prevent, and respond to child abuse.
- Guide RHH Life Ed Representatives on what actions to take if they suspect abuse, whether inside or outside RHH Life Ed.
- Clearly state that any form of abuse is forbidden.
- Provide assurance that all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

Policy

RHH Life Ed is committed to the promotion of child safety and wellbeing through the implementation of the ten National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. RHH Life Ed is guided in its policy and procedures by these principles:

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
5. Staff Members and volunteers working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
6. Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Child protection is a shared responsibility, and the successful implementation of this policy is reliant on all Representatives committing to and upholding the principles of this policy.

Responsibilities

The Board of RHH Life Ed has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring appropriate and effective policies, procedures and internal control systems are in place.

The Board Chair is responsible to ensure all Board members:

- are aware of and comply with the relevant Legislation;
- are aware of and comply with all organisational policies and procedures in relation to child protection;
- comply with RHH Life Ed's Code of Conduct, particularly as it relates to child safety; and
- have the knowledge, skills and capabilities required to comply with their obligations under this Policy, the Code of Conduct, any relevant law and/or regulatory guidance.

The Board of RHH Life Ed are responsible for:

- Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse;
- Ensuring all employees, contractors, and volunteers are aware of Relevant Legislation, organisational policies and procedures, and RHH Life Ed's Code of Conduct;

- Ensuring all Representatives of RHH Life Ed are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with this policy and procedures;
- Ensuring all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the RHH Life Ed Code of Conduct, particularly as it relates to child safety;
- Providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

All managers must ensure they:

- Promote child safety at all times;
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate or minimise any risk to the extent possible;
- Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.

All Representatives are responsible for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the Relevant Legislation, the RHH Life Ed Code of Conduct, and this policy, and comply with all requirements;
- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and/or the state-based child protection service) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters;
- Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to their supervisor (or, if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person in the organisation);
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

Employment of new personnel

RHH Life Ed conducts a thorough recruitment and screening process for all staff members and volunteers to:

- promote and protect the safety of all children in its care;
- identify the safest and most suitable people who share RHH Life Ed's values and commitment to protecting children; and prevent anyone who may be a risk to children from working at RHH Life Ed.

RHH Life Ed requires all staff members, volunteers and Board Members to go through its recruitment and screening processes before starting their work with RHH Life Ed.

Before starting at RHH Life Ed, and regularly while working there, applicants must provide a Working with Children Check in accordance with the law.

RHH Life Ed will also conduct thorough reference checks following their internal procedures.

Once hired, staff members and volunteers must read and confirm they understand this Policy.

Each year, Staff members, Volunteers and Board Members are required to complete Child Protection training organised by RHH Life Ed.

Risk Management

RHH Life Ed will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach.

Reporting

Any RHH Life Ed Representative who suspects abusive activity must immediately notify the relevant child protection service or police and inform their supervisor.

If the supervisor is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the matter is not being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next highest level of supervision.

Supervisors must report suspected abuse or misconduct to the RHH Life Ed Board of Directors and also to any external regulatory body such as the police.

Investigating

If the appropriate child protection service or the police decide to investigate a report, all Representatives must fully co-operate with the investigation.

If no external investigation is conducted, the RHH Life Ed Board of Directors may initiate an internal investigation, ensuring it doesn't interfere with any external proceedings. Representatives are expected to co-operate, and the investigation will follow fair procedures. The RHH Life Ed Board of Directors will aim to keep the investigation confidential, though others may need to be consulted.

After an initial review and a determination that the suspected abuse warrants additional investigation, the C RHH Life Ed Board of Directors shall co-ordinate the investigation with law enforcement and legal advisors, if appropriate.

Responding

If a Representative is accused of an offence, they may be temporarily stood down (with pay, if applicable) during the investigation.

If the investigation concludes that, on the balance of probabilities, an offence has occurred, disciplinary action may be taken, including dismissal or cessation of involvement with RHH Life Ed. The findings of the investigation will be reported to relevant authorities.

Privacy

Personal information will remain private unless someone's safety is at risk. RHH Life Ed will have measures in place to protect personal data (refer to the RHH Life Ed Privacy Policy).

Reviewing

Each year, or after any reportable incident, RHH Life Ed will review its child protection policies and procedures to ensure they effectively protect the children under RHH Life Ed's care.

APPENDIX: Guidelines for taking photos of children

There are laws and regulations in Australia when it comes to the taking, sharing and storing of photos of children.

These are the procedures to follow if you are taking photos of children on behalf of RHH Life Ed:

- 1) **Written consent is a must.** It is not enough to rely on the school's permission slips. If you are taking a photo for the purposes of RHH Life Ed's promotions (marketing, media, social media etc) you will need a parent/carer to sign a photo consent form. Contact the Marketing and Communications Manager for a copy of the form as it is updated regularly. After the form is signed by the parents/carer, please return it to the Marketing and Communications Manager by post or email.
- 2) **Parents or teachers should be present** when you take the photo, and should have an understanding about what you want to use the photo for (eg social media etc – this is outlined on the permission form). You should not be unsupervised with individual access to a child when taking the photo.
- 3) **Consent of child.** Seek the child or young person's consent to ensure that their privacy is not breached. When obtaining consent from a young person to publish an image, the consent process should be explained in plain language that a young person could easily understand. Informed consent may be verbally obtained from a child or young person while in the presence of their parent or guardian.
- 4) **Relevant.** Only use images of children that are relevant to RHH Life Ed's activities and services. Particular care needs to be taken when using images of children for RHH Life Ed activities that involve minimal clothing, such as swimming or gymnastic activities.
- 5) **Identification.** There should be no identifying personal information accompanying photographs, including the child's name, address or telephone number. Group photographs reduce the risk of identifying individual children. Do not display information about children's hobbies, likes or dislikes, school, or other identifiable information.
- 6) **Safe storage.** If you have taken the photo on your personal camera or phone on behalf of RHH Life Ed, you should delete it within a reasonable time frame. Any images taken will remain the property of RHH Life Ed and cannot be used or sold for other purposes. Any negatives must also be destroyed or handed over to RHH Life Ed.
- 7) **Contact.** Parents/teachers should be provided with a person to contact from RHH Life Ed. This is provided on the permission form. Please refer them to the Marketing and Communications Manager if they have any questions/concerns.

Additional information can be obtained from:-

Office of the e-Safety Commissioner:

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/education-resources/parent/staying-safe/photos-videos-and-social-media>

Australian Institute of Family Studies:

<https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/images-children-and-young-people-online>

Everyone in our organisation is expected to carry out the requirements specific to their role to keep children safe. This includes:

- upholding our organisation's commitment to child safety
- reading, signing and upholding the behaviours set out in our Child Safe Code of Conduct
- meeting requirements across all other child safe policies and procedures, including child safe recruitment practices and risk management
- taking part in our regular reviews of our child safe documents
- reporting all breaches of our policies or any allegations of child harm or abuse, and meeting all external reporting obligations
- completing all child safe training.