

AHIGS Child Safe Reporting Policy

Scope of the Policy

The Association of Heads of Independent Girls' Schools NSW (AHIGS) trading as Independent Girls' Schools Association (IGSA) and its members' schools have identified Child Safe Reporting as integral to the objectives of the Association and for all activities that it undertakes. The Child Safe Reporting Policy applies to all employees, volunteers and contractors of IGSA.

Purpose of the Policy

To help keep children safe, we must create, maintain and improve our child safe reporting practices to ensure they remain effective. Everyone in IGSA must:

- know what to report, who to report it to and how to report it;
- report any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or young person immediately;
- feel confident that concerns and allegations will be dealt with honestly and fairly;
- feel confident in reporting unacceptable behaviour around children and young people;
- ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child is paramount when an allegation is made.

Our reporting practices will be regularly reviewed and updated to make sure they remain effective and comply with legislation.

Working with Children

Everyone who volunteers for, is employed or contracted by IGSA, who engages in child-related work is required to:

- hold and maintain a valid WWCC clearance;
- not engage in child-related work at any time that they are subjected to an interim bar or a bar;
- report to the Executive Officer if they are no longer eligible for a WWCC clearance, and / or the status of their WWCC clearance changes, and / or they are notified by the OGG that they are subjected to a risk assessment, and / or under investigation as a result of an allegation.
- If under the age of 18, a parent or guardian is required to complete the **Contractor Personnel Undertaking (if UNDER 18)** contained within the contract to state that the contractor satisfies the child protection requirements.

The Association is required to:

- verify online, and record the status of each child-related worker's WWCC clearance;
- only engage child-related workers or eligible volunteers who have a valid WWCC clearance.

Compliance

The Executive Officer, or their delegate, monitors compliance with this Policy and securely maintains the Association's records relevant to this Policy, which includes:

- A register of staff members who have read and acknowledged that they read and understood this Policy; and
- Working with Children Check clearance (WWCC clearance) verifications;

Children protection concerns - definitions of harm

- Psychological abuse

Includes bullying, threatening and abusive language, intimidation, shaming and name calling, ignoring and isolating a child, and exposure to domestic and family violence.

- Physical abuse

Includes physical punishment such as pushing, shoving, punching, slapping and kicking, resulting in injury, burns, choking or bruising.

- Sexual abuse

Includes the sexual touching of a child, grooming, and production, distribution or possession of child abuse material (often known as photography).

- Grooming

The process where a person manipulates a child or group of children, and sometimes those looking after them, including parents, carers, teachers and leaders. They do this to establish a position of trust so they can then later sexually abuse the child.

- Misconduct

Inappropriate behaviour that may not be as severe as abuse, although could indicate that abuse is occurring and would often be in breach of an organisation's Child Safeguarding Policy*, including showing a child something inappropriate on a phone, having inappropriate conversations with a child or an adult sitting with a child on their lap.

- Lack of appropriate care

Includes not providing adequate and proper supervision, nourishment, clothing, shelter, education or medical care.

*Please refer to our Child Safeguarding Policy for a full list of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours at our Association.

Types of complaints

All complaints should be reported. These include:

- criminal conduct;
- risk of significant harm (ROSH);
- disclosures of abuse;
- unacceptable behaviour around children and young people that breaches the Child Safeguarding Policy;
- suspicion of harm or an abuse to a young child.

Making a complaint

Everyone in IGSA has the right to make a genuine complaint and won't be punished if they do. This includes children and young people, staff members, contractors and volunteers. Reporting abuse is mandatory and encouraged – it is never obstructed or prevented. (*see reporting template on page 5).

External Reporting and Complaints

As someone representing IGSA, all our contractors, staff and volunteers play a crucial role in protecting children. If anyone suspects there has been an alleged breach of Child Safeguarding Policy, they must act.

- Reporting criminal conduct

Contact NSW Police on 131 444 for anything considered could be a criminal offence. This includes sexual assault, physical assault, grooming offences, and producing, disseminating or possessing child abuse material.

Note: It is a criminal offence for adults not to report to police if they know or believe that a child abuse offence has been committed. In addition, people employed in child-related work may be subject to a criminal offence if they fail to reduce or remove the risk of a child becoming a victim of child abuse.

- Reporting risk of significant harm

Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm (ROSH) can report to the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) on 132 111 (this is a 24-hour service).

- Complaints

Any person who has a complaint or grievance against any IGSA staff member, contractor and / or volunteer may follow the reporting process in accordance with the Complaints Policy (available on the IGSA website)

Risk Management

To ensure the immediate and ongoing safety of the child:

- establish the welfare and safety of the child and take steps to ensure the child is removed from the risk;
- reassure them and remain calm;
- listen carefully without interrupting;
- don't ask leading questions or any additional questions once you've established there is a genuine concern (to not compromise future investigations by NSW Police or DCJ);
- support them, reassuring the child that they have done the right thing, that you believe them and that the abuse is not their fault;
- explain what will happen, including timeframes;
- don't make promises you can't keep;
- don't confront the alleged perpetrator;
- seek guidance if you are unsure about what to do.

Procedural fairness

Any allegation of abuse will be treated in a fair, transparent and timely manner. Workers subject to an allegation will be notified when a disciplinary hearing will take place and what will occur at the hearing. We follow the obligations defined under the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth). Additionally:

- All information is recorded on our reporting form for complaints and allegations.
- All reporting forms for complaints and allegations are stored securely and only accessed by those in the organisation with responsibility for oversight of the investigation.
- Information may be exchanged under Chapter 16A of the Child and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, with other agencies who have responsibilities relating to the safety, welfare or wellbeing of children or young people. Our Association maintains the privacy of those involved in accordance with our obligations under the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.
- If an incident is found to be substantiated, likely outcomes or responses will be determined by the Executive Officer or from advice given by relevant authorities (police, DCJ or OCG).

Internal Complaints – reports of breaches of Child Safeguarding Policy

Everyone engaged to work or volunteer for IGSA OR children and young people or their families or advocates, and other members of the community, must make a report about any child abuse or misconduct concerns they either observe or are told about.

The person making the report will not be penalised. A failure to report, or preventing another person from reporting, will be considered misconduct.

All breaches and disclosures must be reported to the Executive Officer, or if it involves the Executive Officer, the Chair of the Board.

Process

Once a complaint has been made, we use this step-by-step process to make sure it's appropriately followed up:

- steps taken to remove child from harm;
- incident recorded;
- reporting obligations met, if necessary;
- investigation conducted, keeping everyone involved up to date with what's happening;
- offering ongoing support to the child as needed;
- reviewing the incident and updating the organisation's child safe policies, if necessary.

Relevant legislation:

- Crimes Act 1900
- Child and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Children's Guardian Act 2019
- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.
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Definitions

AHIGS Association of Heads of Independent Girls' Schools of NSW
IGSA Independent Girls' Schools Association (trading name of AHIGS)

The policy is to be read in conjunction with the following documents (available on the IGSA website - <https://igsa.nsw.edu.au/>):

- a. AHIGS Child Safeguarding Policy
- b. IGSA Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy
- c. IGSA Sport Code of Conduct
- d. AHIGS / IGSA Complaints Policy
- e. AHIGS Privacy Policy

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

EFFECTIVE DATE 1 September 2025
REVIEW FREQUENCY At least annually

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Date	Author	Additional Information
V1.0	01/01/2025	SBB	
V2.0	28/07/2025	SBB	

DOCUMENT REVIEW

Version	Date	Reviewed By	Additional Information
V2.0	01/09/2025	SBB	Board approved

Template for person making a Report

This form should be used to record a suspicion, allegation or disclosure of child abuse, or a complaint of unacceptable behaviour.

Your name and position

Name of the child or young person involved

Name of person making complaint

Name of person who the complaint was made against

1. Nature of the complaint: include time, date, location, what happened and who was involved (this can include observations of the child's behaviour).

2. Details of any injuries and if the child received medical attention.

3. Accurately record what the child said when describing what happened – use their exact words or record why you suspect abuse due to an indirect disclosure, such as a drawing or observed behaviour.

(In the case of an allegation of abuse, formal investigations and interviews will be carried out by DCJ and / or NSW Police. You must record what the child has said but unless it is your role to investigate, you should not interview the child.)

4. Details of anyone who saw what happened.

5. Does this complaint indicate the possibility of child abuse, such as physical abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect?

Yes

No

6. Who did you make a report to?

NSW Police

DCJ via ChildStory

DCJ via 132 111

OCG Reportable Conduct Directorate

Internal reporting obligations (name the relevant department or person)

Other (name them)

7. People spoken to in relation to the matter (describe who was spoken to and why they were spoken to about the matter – include police officers, DCJ staff, OCG staff and anyone else you spoke to).

Date(s):

Your rights and responsibilities

You have a responsibility to:

- Understand and adhere to your role based on your position description.
- Be fair and inclusive and treat everyone with respect and dignity.
- Act with care and diligence to protect the safety and well-being of yourself and others.
- Ensure that any physical contact made with a child / young person is necessary and appropriate to the delivery of the inter school activity.
- Understand and implement all policies and requirements of your activity including child safe practices and code of conduct.
- Maintain required coaching accreditation and be responsible for enhancing your coaching knowledge.
- Listen to and involve children and young people in decision making.
- Accept and respect the authority of all match officials or other equivalent authority.
- Speak up and address or report any inappropriate behaviour.

You have the right to:

- Feel safe in your role.
- Be provided with a position description that clearly outlines your role.
- Be provided with induction training that provides information on your organisation's policies and expectations.
- Be listened to and supported by your organisation.
- Know that if you report a concern, it will be addressed in a timely manner in line with your organisation's policies and procedures.