

Child Safe Policy

Purpose

To ensure all children who are involved in any of the Uniting Venues' activities, services, events or programs have a right to feel and be safe.

Uniting Venues is committed to providing safe environments where children are cared for, respected and nurtured.

Scope

All venues

Communication

Child Participation

Uniting Venues supports the active participation of children in our organisation. We respect what they say and will listen to their views and feedback.

Internal

Regular information sessions will be held for all Uniting Venues staff.

This policy will be discussed during induction sessions for all new Uniting Venues staff.

External

This policy is available on our website as a downloadable PDF.

Uniting Venues utilises an externally managed "Speak Out" system, which allows all staff, guests, volunteers and contractors a confidential means of reporting anything they see, hear or experience that gives them concern.

Code of Conduct

Contractors

Uniting Venues requires that all regular contractors attending our venues have a valid Working With Children Check (WWCC), which we will keep on file. Any contractor without a valid WWCC on file, is accompanied by a Uniting Venues member of staff at all times. When on site, contractors are required to sign in and collect a Contractor badge, which is to be displayed throughout their visit.

Staff

Uniform

Uniting Venues employees can be easily identified by embroidered uniform shirts with the Uniting Venues or the Rise Above Outdoor Education logo.

Two Adult Rule

When Uniting Venues employees require access to bedrooms or bathrooms while occupied by a guest a minimum of two employees will attend, and the door will remain open at all times.

Staff Supervision

On any allocated shift where possible, employees will be supervised by a Venue Attendant / Supervisor and be encouraged to work in teams of two.

Staff Training

Uniting Venues will provide training on this policy to all employees and will strive to provide opportunities for additional training on an annual basis.

This policy will be accessible by all employees on the Hub system.

Management

The policy and guidelines will be reviewed every two years and incorporate comments and suggestions from children and young people, parents and staff.

Recruitment

Recruitment

Uniting Venues will maintain a rigorous and consistent recruitment, screening and selection process.

Written application

All persons seeking to work with Uniting Venues must complete and sign a written application form. The application will request basic information from the applicant and inquire into previous employment information. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at each specific venue.

Personal interview

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview will be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

Reference Checks

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, applicants are required to provide two employment references that will be checked by the Site Manager.

Working with Children Check

A Working with Children Check is required for all employees (aged 18 years & over). The WWCC must be independently verified through the Uniting Venues employer portal.

Only after clearance is received from the NSW WWCC via the employer portal may the applicant be offered a role with Uniting Venues.

Complaints and Concerns

Uniting Venues staff are not required to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act by reporting any concerns to the appropriate authorities.

Uniting Venues will assure all staff that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Site Manager, who will take immediate steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

Uniting Venues will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and any Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) investigation.

Irrespective of findings, Uniting Venues will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff can be re-instated. The welfare of the child/young person will remain of paramount importance throughout.

Managing Risks

Uniting Venues will carry out WHS risk assessments, as appropriate. We will act on the findings of risk assessments by eliminating or reducing significant risks as appropriate and as reasonably practicable.

See the policy *Managing Risk* for details.

Rise Above Outdoor Activities

Supervision

Supervision is a critical factor in managing risk in the outdoors. A minimum of one Rise Above staff must be present for each activity. **The minimum supervision ratio will be: 1:15 per participants.**

The allocation of staff should be based on:

- age, maturity and gender of students
- ability and experience of students
- individual needs
- group dynamics of the student group
- experience, qualifications and skills of staff
- location conditions.

The teacher in charge is responsible for the supervision strategy that must be endorsed by the school council as part of the excursion approval process. Staff members will supervise students according to that strategy. In the event that a teacher/group representative is not available to be at the site of each activity, the activity will be cancelled and schools will be liable for any associated costs.

Refer to Uniting Venues *Outdoor Activities Policy* for further details.

Accountabilities

| Role | Accountabilities |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| General Manager | <p>Provide leadership by actively promoting mutual care in matters of Child Safe policies and procedures amongst guests, staff, contractors, volunteers and other visitors to Uniting Venues sites.</p> <p>Oversee the development of a systematic approach to providing Child Safe venues.</p> <p>Ensure an appropriate Child Safe training program is in place and encourage positive participation by all staff.</p> <p>Communicate any Child Safe matters to staff, as appropriate.</p> <p>Keep the Board informed of any Child Safe performance issues or matters.</p> |
| Site Managers | <p>Implement a systematic approach to managing a Child Safe venue.</p> <p>Facilitate, prepare and implement a Child Safe Policy review as required.</p> <p>Schedule any training in relation to the company’s Child Safe Policy.</p> <p>Maintain training records for individual staff members with relation to the venue’s Child Safe Policy.</p> <p>Ensure any Child Safe issues are communicated to relevant people, as appropriate.</p> |
| Rise Above Coordinators | <p>Treat children with respect, dignity, act with propriety and provide a duty of care.</p> <p>Provide a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children and young people is nurtured.</p> <p>Undergo adequate child safety training as per Uniting Venues and NSW Standards.</p> |
| Guest Relations Officer | <p>Follow all relevant Child Safety rules, procedures and directives.</p> <p>Report all Child Safety incidents.</p> |
| All staff, contractors and volunteers | <p>Follow all relevant Child Safety rules, procedures and directives.</p> <p>Report all Child Safety incidents.</p> |
| Guests | <p>Follow all relevant Child Safety rules, procedures and directives.</p> <p>Report all Child Safety incidents.</p> |

References

Policies

- *Managing Risk Policy*
- *Workplace health and safety policy*
- *First Aid policy*
- *Recruitment Staff Policy*
- *Outdoor Activities Policy*
- *Managing Contractors Policy*

Standards

National Child Safe Policy Framework 2017

NSW Government Office of the Children's Guardian