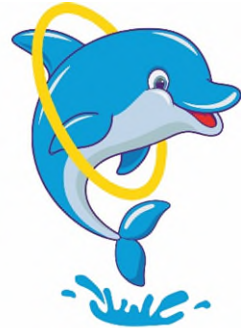


**BLUE DOLPHIN**

S W I M C E N T R E

...where kids love to swim!



## Child Safe Environments Policy

Version: 1.0, Created December 2019  
Last Review Date: December 2019  
Next Review Date: July 2021

## 1 Document Purpose

This document has been created to summarise the actions and activities undertaken at Blue Dolphin Swim Centre (BDSC) to create a 'Child Safe Environment'.

A child safe organisation:

- "takes a preventative, proactive and participatory stance on child protection issues
- is one that values and embraces the opinions and views of children
- encourages and assists children to build skills that will assist them to participate in society
- takes action to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse and neglect."<sup>1</sup>

In order to create and maintain a child safe environment, BDSC has implemented several codes, policies, assessments and training which are referenced within this document. Copies of most material can be provided on request.

By creating, reviewing and updating this document BDSC ensures that staff, volunteers, parents and students have access to the tools and information required to create a child safe environment, and are subject to strict regulation to maintain it.

## 2 Our commitment to the safety of children and young people

BDSC recognises its legal obligations to ensure a child safe environment, and confirms that our policy is compliant with the child safe environment provisions of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017<sup>2</sup>

Above and beyond regulatory compliance, BDSC is committed to providing a service where the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is our first priority. We aim to provide an environment where children and young people feel safe, valued and respected, and an environment in which everyone is encouraged to fulfil their potential.

We continuously strive to provide the highest level of care, and are committed to listening and responding to questions, feedback and complaints to create, maintain and improve our child safe environment.

This document, and associated codes and policies detail the steps we follow to achieve this.

## 3 Children's participation

It is our expectation at BDSC that all staff and volunteers positively engage our students in a way that suits the individual. To this end, every BDSC staff member is trained in our 4 point philosophy in the involvement of children and young people.

1. **Encourage** – Create an open and trusting environment that encourages children and young people to voice feedback or concerns
2. **Listen** – Show patience and understanding when children and young people speak
3. **Believe** – Believe what children and young people are saying, and value their input
4. **Respond** – Take appropriate action, according to BDSC codes and procedures

<sup>1</sup> *Child Safe Environments Principles of Good Practice*, Government of South Australia, Department of Human Services

<sup>2</sup> *subject to assessment by Government of South Australia, Department of Human Services, submitted Feb 2020*

Through this approach we are able to gather feedback and take action to continually improve our services and environment.

In addition, the BDSC customer handbook details the procedure customers should follow should they wish to provide feedback about any aspect of our business, or raise any complaint or concern. The handbook is provided to all customers of the swim centre, and available at any time on request.

#### 4 Code of conduct

On commencing employment at BDSC all staff and volunteers are issued with our Blue Dolphin Swim Centre Employee Handbook. It is a requirement of employment that individuals read, and provide signed acknowledgment that they will abide by all codes and principles outlined within the document. This includes our Code of Conduct.

The BDSC Code of Conduct clearly outlines our definitions and expectations of acceptable behaviour, ethical conduct and appropriate action at all times when in the employment of the centre.

Further to this, the Employee Handbook dedicates a section specifically to our Agreed Standards for Handling Children. This covers the mental, physical and emotional handling of children, to promote a safe, happy and healthy environment.

Compliance with this Code, as with all law in an open society, depends primarily upon understanding and voluntary compliance, secondarily upon reinforcement by peer and public opinion. However, if and when necessary, compliance with all Codes and Policies is reinforced through disciplinary proceedings.

#### 5 Working with children check requirements

At Blue Dolphin it is a requirement for all volunteers, trainees and employees to have an up to date Working With Children Check before they carry out any activities on-site. In addition we follow a rigorous, multi stage interview and selection process to ensure our staff are suitable to work with children and young people.

Before any employee is given the responsibility to teach children and young people, the following process is carefully and consistently followed:

- Position advertised through online job seeking sites, in house advertising, social media and the company website, with advert including a clear description of the position. Applicants can apply online or alternatively submit a written application to our in-house Recruitment Officer.
- **Phase 1 Screening:** The recruitment officer will call the applicant to ask appropriate pre-interview questions and explain the job role in more depth.
- **Phase 2 Screening:** If the applicant is successful in phase 1, a face to face interview is conducted. This enables a more in depth assessment of skills, experience and suitability for the role.
- **Phase 3 Screening:** If the applicant is successful in phase 2, a second interview is conducted in the pool with direct supervision and mentoring. This will assess candidate suitability for our specific environment.
- If successful the applicant is offered the opportunity to start training, conditional upon:
  - o A current Working With Children Check

- Suitable references, checked by our in-house Recruitment Officer
- Suitable qualifications. This is often desirable but not necessary for all of our roles.
- All candidates are then required to complete a minimum of 40 hours of guided training, with progress and observations logged through their individual training logbook. Progress is carefully assessed at mid-point and the end of 40 hours.
- The Senior Teacher will conduct a final review, marking off safety, engagement, teaching, development and knowledge, and provide a recommendation on how to proceed with each candidate. This may be to offer, release or extend training.
- Once the candidate has consistently attained the Blue Dolphin standard of teaching, only then will a position be offered.
- In order to take up employment, the candidate must sign and acknowledge all relevant Codes, Standards and Guidelines.

Blue Dolphin utilises a specialist HR software package to manage ongoing adherence to the required checks and qualifications required to fulfil each role, and has real time access to the compliance status of all staff. Should any employee become non-compliant, Blue Dolphin will suspend the staff member until this is rectified.

Blue Dolphin invests a significant amount of time and resource to find, recruit, train and employ the right people for our business, for our customers and for their children.

## 6 Training and development

All Blue Dolphin staff are trained on the principles and practices of creating and maintaining child safe environments during their initial induction, before they commence working with children.

They are provided with a copy of the BDSC Employee Handbook, and are required to read and provide signed acknowledgment that they will abide by all codes and principles outlined within the document. This includes our Core values, Code of Conduct, Agreed standards for handling children, Customer complaint policy and Disciplinary procedure.

All staff are also required to read and understand 'Child safe environments: Guidelines for mandated notifiers and information for organisations'.

To ensure we maintain current, relevant and compliant training standards, our Recruitment Officer and in-house Trainer continually review external training courses that we may incorporate from time to time to supplement our own training.

## 7 Risk management

Blue Dolphin Swim Centre is committed to minimising or eliminating the risk of harm to children and young people, and takes a proactive approach to the identification and mitigation of risk across all areas of our business. A full risk assessment is conducted annually, which considers (but is not limited to):

- Child handling – Physical
- Child handling – Emotional
- Capturing images of children
- Complaints handling
- Adherence to BDSC codes and policies
- Privacy and confidentiality

Following a review of these potential risks, BDSC agrees and implements steps to minimise or eliminate the opportunity for harm to occur. This output is documented and made available to all staff through our shared network and can be made available to customers on request. Our Risk Management Strategy is evaluated on a bi-annual basis.

## 8 Complaints and concerns

BDSC recognises and takes seriously the possibility that staff, parents and children may wish to make a complaint about our environment, services or people. We welcome this opportunity to identify and rectify issues and therefore provide a clear mechanism for this to occur.

The BDSC Customer Handbook is issued to all customers of the centre, and this clearly details the procedure customers should follow should they wish to provide feedback about any aspect of our business, or raise any complaint or concern.

Further, every BDSC staff member is trained in our 4 point philosophy in the involvement of children and young people, to help identify and understand the concerns of our students. This trains them to 'Encourage, Listen, Believe and Respond'.

All feedback, issues or concerns that are raised are documented, discussed and appropriate action agreed by all relevant parties. Where required and appropriate the outcome is fed back to the individual who initially provided the feedback, issue or complaint.

Should any employee or staff member have suspicion of actual or potential risk to the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, they will refer and adhere to the BDSC Child Complaint Handling Policy, provided to all staff and volunteers at induction and available at any time through the BDSC HR Employment system.

Further details on how staff and volunteers respond to a suspicion that a child or young person may be at risk is included in Section 10 below.

## 9 Communication

It is essential to its effectiveness that this Policy is available to, and understood by, all of our staff and customers. We also welcome feedback and input into the Policy to maintain its relevance. To this end, copies of this policy are published:

- Publically on our website (<https://bluedolphinswim.com.au/CSE.pdf>)
- For all staff at Induction
- For all customers as a link within our Customer Handbook

This policy can also be provided electronically or in hard copy format, on request, at any time.

## 10 Reporting & responding to a suspicion of risk to a child or young person

In order to help ensure that children and young people are kept safe from harm, BDSC believes that not only do we have an obligation to provide a physical environment free from risk of abuse and harm, but that we also have a responsibility to provide a cultural environment within which staff feel confident and supported to identify and report possible risk of harm, and that children and young people have the trust to disclose fear or incidents of harm, to themselves or others.

In order to develop this cultural environment, BDSC makes clear the responsibility of its staff and volunteers, provides clear guidelines on obligations and processes, and ensures follow up support for employees, volunteers, children, young people or families as required.

As a provider of sporting services to children and young people, all employees and volunteers within Blue Dolphin Swim Centre have a mandatory obligation to report any suspicion, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person is, or may be at risk, of harm and this suspicion is formed in the course of their work.<sup>3</sup>

Reasonable grounds to form a suspicion that a child or young person may be at risk may include:

- when a child tells you they are at risk or have been harmed
- when your own observations of a particular child's behaviour and/or injuries lead you to suspect they are at risk or harm is occurring
- when a child tells you that they know of someone who is at risk or has been harmed (they may possibly be referring to themselves)
- when you hear about a child at risk from someone who is in a position to provide reliable information, such as a relative, friend, neighbour or sibling of the child.

Employees and volunteers will report this suspicion to the Child Abuse Report Line (ph. 13 14 78).

Once a report has been made, BDSC recognises that this does not discharge its responsibility towards the protection of the child, and employees and volunteers may still have a role in supporting the child or young person. This support could include (but is not limited to):

- referring the child, young person or their family to other appropriate services
- continuing to provide a service to the child or young person and their family and monitoring their circumstances
- displaying information about services that can assist children and their families (such as the Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 and Youth Healthline 1300 13 17 19) in areas accessed by children, young people and their families.

Further to this, BDSC also takes very seriously its responsibility toward protecting and supporting any employee or volunteer who makes a report of suspicion that a child or young person may be at risk. Whilst legislation protects the reporter's identity from disclosure, and provides that any individual reporting in good faith cannot be liable in any civil, criminal or administrative proceeding, BDSC is concerned with supporting the emotional impact of the event. To this end, BDSC has documented an "Internal support framework for mandatory notifiers", and this is included in the employee handbook.

Whilst training for mandatory notifiers is not a legal requirement, BDSC ensures that through Induction, Training and the Employee Handbook, all staff and volunteers have a clear understanding of their obligations, and understand the procedures and support available to them at any time.

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<sup>3</sup> Chapter 5 of the Safety Act

## 11 Evaluation and review

It is a requirement of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 that child safe environments policies and procedures are reviewed at least once in every five years. In view of our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children, our policy and associated procedures are routinely reviewed on a bi-annual basis, during BDSC July shutdown.

Policies may also be reviewed and updated in the case that (but not limited to):

- new or additional risks are identified
- any incident or near incident occurs
- any significant change to management personnel occurs
- any concerns are raised or feedback is provided that requires amendment or would make a positive contribution to ensuring a child safe environment

Version tracking is included in Appendix 1.

## Appendix 1: Document Tracking

<b>Date</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Prev. Version Number</b>	<b>New Version Number</b>
07/12/19	Document Created	Angie Parker	N/A	1.0
25/02/20	Document submitted for approval	Angie Parker		N/A
21/03/20	Document published for public access	Angie Parker		N/A