 MACQUARIE University	<h2>Keeping Children Safe</h2>	Work Area:	U@MQ Ltd
		Contact Officer:	Child Safety Officer
		Revision Number:	4
		Policy	

PURPOSE	This policy outlines our commitment to ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and rights of all children in our care. It provides guidance to staff, volunteers, and families on how we create a childsafe environment and respond to concerns about child harm or abuse.
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OVERVIEW	<p>Child Safe Commitment: <i>U@MQ Ltd (Campus Life) is committed to the safety, wellbeing and empowerment of all children and young people engaging in our programs and to protect them from foreseeable harm.</i></p> <p><i>Campus Life employees have a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play, individually and collectively, to ensure that the well-being and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do.</i></p> <p><i>Campus Life treats all allegations and complaints about the safety and wellbeing of children seriously and is committed to ensuring that its staff, volunteers and contractors understand the legal obligations to keep children safe and report child abuse and neglect to government authorities.</i></p> <p>Definitions are provided in Appendix A of this document.</p> <p>This policy can be accessed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by employees via the Campus Life IMS • on the Campus Life Early Learning Centres website • in hard copy at <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Early Learning Centres ○ School holiday program locations ○ Gymnastics and Learn to Swim <p>In addition, the policy will be provided upon request to families at any time.</p>
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RESPONSIBILITY/SCOPE	<p>U@MQ Ltd volunteers and contractors in child-related employment, U@MQ Board Directors (the Approved Provider) and employees.</p> <p>For the purposes of this document, U@MQ Ltd is referred to as Campus Life.</p>
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THE POLICY	
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This policy is underpinned by the Child Safe Standards and informed by the principles in the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (1991) and the [Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics](#) (2017). This policy should be read in conjunction with the [Responding to Allegations Against Staff Policy](#).

Guiding Principles

- Child-centred Approach: Children’s safety and wellbeing are our highest priority
- Participation and Empowerment: Children are encouraged to express their views and participate in decisions affecting them where possible. We create safe spaces for children to be heard and respected
- Equity and Inclusion: We are committed to providing a culturally safe environment for all children

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- Zero Tolerance for Child Abuse: We do not tolerate any form of child abuse or harm. All allegations and safety concerns are treated seriously and responded to promptly in line with legal obligations and internal procedures
- Family and Community Engagement: We work in partnership with families and communities to promote child safety
- Accountability and Transparency: We maintain clear roles, responsibilities, and reporting structures. Staff are held accountable for upholding child safety standards and are supported through training and supervision
- Continuous Improvement: We use feedback, incidents, and new insights to inform our ongoing development and policy updates and improve our child safety practices
- Safe Recruitment and Training: We recruit staff who are committed to child safety. All staff undergo child-safe screening and receive ongoing training in child protection and wellbeing applicable to their role

Standard 1 - Child Safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

- Campus Life policies, procedures and practices support and prioritise child safety. This includes:
 - The physical environment and staffing levels support child safe practices
 - Staff have the knowledge and skills to identify and respond to concerns about a child's welfare
 - Adequate financial resources are provided for staff training in child protection to ensure they remain up to date on best practice and legislative requirements
 - U@MQ Ltd Board directors complete relevant Child Protection training
 - Child safety is a standing item on meeting agendas where programs or activities involve children
 - Policies and procedures incorporate a child safety lens and prioritise the rights of the child
- The Child Safe Commitment Statement is visible on the websites for Campus Life children's programs and included in the relevant program Handbooks.


Standard 2 - Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

- Children's voices are listened to and acted upon, including disclosures or allegations of child abuse
- The rights of children are respected and upheld and where possible, they have input into the program/activity
- Children are encouraged to speak up about their safety and the safety of their friends, and to understand age-appropriate ways of behaving with each other and between adults and children
- Children attending the Early Learning Centres receive age-appropriate protective behaviours training

Standard 3 - Families and communities are informed and involved

- Staff respect the expertise, values, culture and beliefs of families and work in partnership with families where possible
- Families are provided with access to information about the program they are enrolling in, including child safe practices, avenues for family involvement in the program and the complaints process
- Policies and procedures are openly shared with families, including opportunities to provide feedback on child safe policies and practices
- Families of the Early Learning Centres are further supported through provision of information and resources that promote positive parenting practices including child development and guiding children's behaviour

Standard 4 - Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account

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- Diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging are central to all Campus Life children’s programs.
- Staff actively support the inclusion of children from all cultures and with diverse abilities. All children are respected and encouraged to respect others and to celebrate differences as well as similarities.
- Staff understand that children have diverse needs, abilities and backgrounds and may be particularly vulnerable if they:
 - Are living with a disability
 - Come from specific religious or cultural backgrounds
 - Are very young
 - Have been exposed to trauma
 - Feel vulnerable because of their gender identity or sexuality
 - Come from diverse family backgrounds
- Where relevant, programs/activities are adjusted to ensure all children can participate.

Standard 5 - People working with children are suitable and supported

- Campus Life meets all legislative requirements associated with employment of staff in child-related work.
- All aspects of the Working with Children Check (WWCC) process are followed, including
 - ensuring employees in child related work, or other roles where the Position Description requires a WWCC, have a verified WWCC clearance before they commence employment
 - maintaining records of WWCC clearance numbers, expiry dates and dates of verification, and any discrepancies/adverse findings
 - Not employing disqualified persons; i.e. a person convicted of, or subject to proceedings relating to certain serious offences against Children prescribed by the Act
- The recruitment and selection of staff in child-related positions upholds child safe practices including:
 - Position Descriptions that state:
 - if the role is considered a Mandatory Reporter
 - if a WWCC is required
 - if an understanding of the staff’s responsibilities under Child Protection laws is required
 - if a police record check/criminal history check is required
 - Interviews that incorporate specific questions to determine each candidate’s understanding of their child protection responsibilities
 - Comprehensive reference checks and compliance with WWCC requirements prior to employment
 - Specifying roles that require child protection training
- The induction process includes:
 - Information about child safe practices
 - Details about the relevant child safe policies and procedures
 - Expectations for reporting concerns
 - Appropriate ways to interact with children and guide their behaviour
- Ongoing access to formal and informal training is provided

Standard 6 - Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused

- The safety of the child is paramount in all responses to a complaint of child abuse
- There are clear procedures for
 - receiving and responding to complaints
 - ensuring children are supported through a complaint investigation

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Standard 7 - Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training

- The Campus Life Child Safe Mandatory Training Matrix ensures all staff undertake a level of child safe training appropriate to their role
 - Staff in child related employment have higher level of mandatory training requirements than other areas
 - An audit of child safe training will be undertaken at least twice per year
- Child Safety is a standing item on staff meeting agendas for areas designated as child related employment as well as at a senior leadership level
- Child protection updates are provided to all staff in child related employment, either as a refresher or when significant changes to the legislation or accepted practice have occurred
- Campus Life Child Safety Officers provide staff, children and parents with advice and appropriate support in the event of a suspected child safety issue
 - For contact details and information about the roles and responsibilities of Child Safety Officers click [here](#) or access it via the IMS

Standard 8 - Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur


- Early Learning Centres minimise opportunities by having in place:
 - [Use of Digital Devices and Children's Images Guidelines](#), which includes staff not having access to a personal device while working with children
 - Supervision Plans for all play spaces
 - Risk assessments that include child safe aspects, particularly for excursions
- Child safety is considered in the design and layout of new children's programs/activities
- Children's access to the internet is supervised by staff and only conducted on Campus Life devices that meet IT specifications, including firewalls and restricted access
- Relevant to the program/activity, children are educated in age-appropriate ways to be safe when going online

Standard 9 - Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved

- A review cycle applies to Campus Life policies and procedures to ensure they remain current and reflective of best practice and relevant legislation
 - A review of this policy incorporates a review of the implementation of the Child Safe Standards
 - Child safe practices and policies are aligned with the latest advice and guidance from external organisations such as the Office of the Children's Guardian
- Reviews or a 'lessons learnt' process are undertaken after any child safe incidents which
 - identifies the root cause of the problem
 - highlights the risks and deficits in practice
 - results in improvements that contribute to the safety of children
- The review of policies and procedures includes consultation with families and other internal and external experts where appropriate
- Self-assessment against the Child Safe Independent assessment of child safe practices undertaken by external bodies may occur following approval by the U@MQ Ltd Board

Standard 10 - Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe

Campus Life has specific policies and procedures related to the safety of children. All policies and procedures are accessible to staff online and staff are informed when documents are amended or added with training provided where applicable.

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Key policies for the Early Learning Centres are available to families online, are discussed during enrolment, and are referenced in the Family Handbook. Hard copies of all policies and procedures are accessible at each early learning centre.

Policies for other children's programs are included in the relevant program Handbook and/or online.

Child safety experts may assist with the review of Campus Life policies, procedures, and practices.

Key Numbers/Links

Responding to incidents, disclosures or suspicions of child abuse or harm flowchart


Child Protection Helpline 132 111

Mandatory Reporter's Guide <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>

ChildStory Reporter Website <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/>

Policy Information

Contact Officer (Role Title)	Child Safety Officers
Date Approved	Aug 2014
Approval Authority (Role Title)	CEO
Date of Commencement	August 2014
Amendment History	Nov 2016 Jan 2022 Dec 2025
Date for Next Review	Dec 2027
Related Documents	<p><u>Legislation</u></p> <p>Education and Care Services National Regulations – Clause 84 Children's Guardian Act 2019 Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012</p> <p><u>Policies, Work Instructions, Forms</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping Children Safe Guidelines • Keeping Children Safe Flowchart • Responding to Allegations Against Staff Policy • Responding to Allegations Against Staff Work Instruction and Flowchart • Code of Conduct – Child Safe Environments • U&MQ Ltd Code of Conduct • Child Safety Officers Poster <p><u>Other</u></p> <p>Implementing the Child Safe Standards: A guide for early childhood education and outside school hours care services</p>
Policies superseded by this	N/A
Keywords	Child protection, child safe, child safety, WWCC, Working with Children Check, at risk of harm, child abuse

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Appendix A – Definitions and Glossary

A **child** means a person under the age of 18 years.

Young person means a person who is aged 16 years or above but who is under the age of 18 years.

A **parent** is someone who has legal responsibility for a child or young person. This may be a natural parent (through birth) or a legal guardian (legally appointed) but does not include a parent who is prohibited by a court order from having contact with the child.

The definition of ‘**a child at-risk of significant harm**’ is (as per the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998- Section 23):

*(1) A child or young person is **at risk of significant harm** if current concerns exist for the safety, welfare or well-being of the child or young person because of the presence, to a significant extent, of any one or more of the following circumstances:*

(a) the child’s or young person’s basic physical or psychological needs are not being met or are at risk of not being met,

(b) the parents or other caregivers have not arranged and are unable or unwilling to arrange for the child or young person to receive necessary medical care,

(b1) in the case of a child or young person who is required to attend school in accordance with the [Education Act 1990](#)—the parents or other caregivers have not arranged and are unable or unwilling to arrange for the child or young person to receive an education in accordance with that Act,

(c) the child or young person has been, or is at risk of being, physically or sexually abused or ill-treated,

(d) the child or young person is living in a household where there have been incidents of domestic violence and, as a consequence, the child or young person is at risk of serious physical or psychological harm,

(e) a parent or other caregiver has behaved in such a way towards the child or young person that the child or young person has suffered or is at risk of suffering serious psychological harm,


(f) the child was the subject of a pre-natal report under section 25 and the birth mother of the child did not engage successfully with support services to eliminate, or minimise to the lowest level reasonably practical, the risk factors that gave rise to the report.

Note. Physical or sexual abuse may include an assault and can exist despite the fact that consent has been given.

(2) Any such circumstances may relate to a single act or omission or to a series of acts or omissions.

Child-related employment is defined under the [Child Protection \(Working With Children\) Act 2012](#) to be if the worker is in face-to-face contact with children and works in one of these industry sectors:

- Child development and family welfare services
- Child protection
- Children’s health services
- Clubs or other bodies providing services for children
- Disability services
- Early education and childcare
- Education
- Entertainment for children
- Justice centres
- Religious services

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- Residential services
- Transport services for children
- Youth workers
- School cleaners

In addition, persons in roles including an approved provider or manager with oversight of an education and care service are considered to be in child-related employment.

Persons in administrative, clerical or maintenance work, or other ancillary work that does not ordinarily involve contact with children for extended periods are exempt from the Working with Children Check.

For the purposes of this policy, the Early Learning Centres, Vacation Care, Junior Science Academy, and all of Sport and Recreation are considered areas of 'child-related employment'.

A **Mandatory Reporter** is an individual required by law to report to relevant authorities when they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child, or class of children, is at risk of significant harm.

This is a person who delivers the following services to children as part of their paid or professional work:

- Health Care
- Welfare
- Education
- Children's Services
- Residential Services
- Law Enforcement
- Disability Services
- Out of School Hours Care

A Mandatory Reporter is also any person who holds a management position, either paid or voluntary, in any of the services listed above and their duties include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of said services.

Mandatory Reporters within Campus Life include:

- all staff employed at the Early Learning Centres
- all staff employed at Vacation Care and Junior Science Academy
- Chief Operating Officer
- Business Operations Manager, Early Learning


Abuse – Types and Signs

(Definitions below as per [DCJ website](#))

Neglect – Neglect is when a parent or caregiver cannot regularly give a child the basic things needed for his or her growth and development, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care, adequate supervision, and enough parenting and care.

Sexual abuse – Sexual abuse is when someone involves a child or young person in a sexual activity by using their power over them or taking advantage of their trust. Often children or young people are bribed or threatened physically and psychologically to make them participate in the activity. Sexual abuse is a crime.

Physical abuse – Physical abuse is a non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child or young person caused by a parent, caregiver or any other person. It includes but is not limited to injuries which are caused

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by excessive discipline, severe beatings or shakings, cigarette burns, attempted strangulation and female genital mutilation.

Injuries include bruising, lacerations or welts, burns, fractures or dislocation of joints. Hitting a child or young person around the head or neck, or using a stick, belt or other object to discipline or punishing a child or young person (in a non-trivial way) is a crime.

Emotional abuse or psychological harm – Serious psychological harm can occur where the behaviour of their parent or caregiver damages the confidence and self-esteem of the child or young person, resulting in serious emotional disturbance or psychological trauma.

Although it is possible for ‘one off’ incidents to cause serious harm, in general it is the frequency, persistence and duration of parental or carer behaviour that is instrumental in defining the consequences for the child or young person.

This can include a range of behaviours such as excessive criticism, withholding affection, exposure to domestic violence, intimidation or threatening behaviour.

Child Grooming - Child grooming refers to an act of deliberately establishing an emotional connection with a child to prepare the child for child abuse. Child grooming is undertaken usually to carry out sexual abuse and other child exploitation like trafficking of children, child prostitution or the production of child pornography. (<https://definitions.uslegal.com/c/child-grooming/> 21/6/2018)

Signs of abuse

(Definitions and content below as per [DCJ website](#))

There are common physical and behavioural signs that may indicate abuse or neglect. The presence of one of these signs does not necessarily mean abuse or neglect. Other things need to be considered, such as the circumstances of the child, young person or family.

When considering if a child or young person has been abused or neglected, or is at risk of this, it is important to keep in mind the life circumstances of the child, young person and their family.

Risk factors

The following risk factors (either singularly or in combination) are associated with increased risk of harm for children and young people:


- social or geographic isolation of the child, young person or family, including lack of access to extended family
- previous abuse or neglect of a brother or sister
- family history of violence including domestic violence
- physical or mental health issues for the parent or caregiver which affects their ability to care for the child or young person in their care
- the parent’s or caregivers’ abuse of alcohol or other drugs that affects their ability to care for the child or young person in their care.

Possible signs of neglect

The signs below are only possible signs of abuse and neglect. The presence of these signs does not necessarily mean abuse and neglect has been, or is, occurring. The child or young person’s circumstances and their age or other vulnerabilities, for example disability or chronic illness, also need to be taken into consideration.

Signs in children or young people

- low weight for age and failure to thrive and develop

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- untreated physical problems, such as sores, serious nappy rash and urine scalds, dental decay
- poor standards of hygiene, for example child or young person consistently unwashed
- poor complexion and hair texture
- child not adequately supervised for their age
- scavenging or stealing food and focus on basic survival
- extended stays at school, public places, other homes
- longs for or indiscriminately seeks adult affection
- rocking, sucking, head-banging
- poor school attendance

Signs in parents or caregivers

- unable or unwilling to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, medical attention, safe home conditions
- leaving the child without appropriate supervision
- abandons the child or young person
- withholding physical contact or stimulation for prolonged periods
- unable or unwilling to provide psychological nurturing
- has limited understanding of the child or young person's needs
- has unrealistic expectations of the child or young person

Possible signs of physical abuse

Signs in children

- bruising to face, head or neck, other bruising and marks which may show the shape of the object that caused it (e.g. belt buckle, hand print)
- lacerations and welts
- drowsiness, vomiting, fits, or pooling of blood in the eyes, which may suggest head injury
- adult bite marks and scratches
- fractures of bones, especially in children under three years old
- dislocations, sprains, twisting
- burns and scalds, including cigarette burns
- multiple injuries or bruises
- explanation of injury offered by the child or young person is not consistent with their injury
- abdominal pain caused by ruptured internal organs, without a history of major trauma
- swallowing of poisonous substances, alcohol or other harmful drugs
- general indicators of female genital mutilation, such as having a 'special operation'


Signs in parents and caregivers

- frequent visits with the child or young person in their care to health or other services with unexplained or suspicious injuries, swallowing of non-food substances or with internal complaints
- explanation of injury offered by the parent is not consistent with the injury
- family history of violence
- history of their own maltreatment as a child
- fears injuring the child or young person in their care
- uses excessive discipline

Possible signs of sexual abuse

Signs in children or young people

- bruising or bleeding in the genital area
- sexually transmitted diseases

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- bruising to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs
- child or young person or their friend telling you about it, directly or indirectly
- describing sexual acts
- sexual knowledge or behaviour inappropriate for the child's age
- going to bed fully clothed
- regressive behaviour, such as sudden return to bed-wetting or soiling
- self-destructive behaviour, such as drug dependency, suicide attempts, self-mutilation
- child being in contact with a known or suspected pedophile
- anorexia or overeating
- adolescent pregnancy
- unexplained accumulation of money and gifts
- persistent running away from home
- risk taking behaviours, such as self-harm, suicide attempts

Signs in parents or caregivers

- exposing a child or young person to prostitution or pornography or using a child for pornographic purposes
- intentional exposure of a child to sexual behaviour of others
- previous conviction or suspicion of child sexual abuse
- coercing a child or young person to engage in sexual behaviour with other children
- verbal threats of sexual abuse
- denial of adolescent's pregnancy by family

Possible signs of emotional abuse


All types of abuse and neglect harm children psychologically, but the term 'psychological harm' or 'emotional abuse' applies to behaviour which damages the confidence and self-esteem of a child or young person, resulting in serious emotional deprivation or trauma.

Signs in children

- constant feelings of worthlessness about life and themselves
- unable to value others
- lack of trust in people
- lack of people skills necessary for daily functioning
- extreme attention-seeking behaviour
- is obsessively eager to please or obey adults
- takes extreme risks, is markedly disruptive, bullying or aggressive
- is highly self-critical, depressed or anxious
- suicide threats or attempts
- persistent running away from home

Signs in parents or caregivers

- constant criticism, belittling, teasing of a child or young person, or ignoring or withholding praise and attention
- excessive or unreasonable demands
- persistent hostility and severe verbal abuse, rejection and scapegoating
- belief that a particular child or young person in their care is bad or 'evil'
- using inappropriate physical or social isolation as punishment
- domestic violence

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Possible signs of child grooming

(<https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/article/Glossary#G> , 25/6/2018)

The signs of grooming aren't always obvious, and groomers will often go to great lengths not to be identified.

Examples of potential grooming behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- attempting to keep a special relationship with a child /young person secret; maneuvering to get time alone with child/young person
- persuading a child/young person or group of children/young people that you have a 'special relationship' (e.g. buying gifts; taking the child/young person to fun places; building trust; getting a vulnerable child young person to feel special and loved)
- testing boundaries (e.g. talking about sex, providing access to sexually explicit material, inappropriate physical contact, undressing in front of a child/young person, being present while a child/young person undresses without reasonable justification)
- inappropriately extending a relationship outside of work (e.g. beyond school, sporting club, social/cultural group)
- inappropriate personal communication (i.e. via telephone, email, text, social media, web forums) which explores sexual feelings or intimate personal feelings with a child/young person
- providing child/young person with drugs or alcohol

If a child is being groomed they may:

- be very secretive, including about what they are doing online
- have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- go to unusual places to meet friends
- have new things such as clothes or mobile phones that they can't or won't explain
- have access to drugs and alcohol

In older children, signs of grooming can easily be mistaken for 'normal' teenage behaviour, but there may be unexplained changes in behaviour or personality, or inappropriate sexual behaviour for their age.

Grooming happens both online and in person. Groomers will hide their true intentions and may spend a long time gaining a child's trust. Groomers may try to gain the trust of a whole family to allow them to be left alone with a child and if they work with children they may use similar tactics with their colleagues.

Groomers do this by:

- pretending to be someone they are not, for example saying they are the same age online
- offering advice or understanding
- buying gifts
- giving the child attention
- using their professional position or reputation
- taking them on trips, outings or holidays.