Child Risk Management Strategy

Policy number	QLD0004	Version	1.0
Drafted by	MSA	Approved by board on	February 2025
Responsible person	Principal	Scheduled review date	July 2027

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1 Organisational Statement

1.1 Mastery Schools Australia is committed to taking all reasonable steps to promote the safety and wellbeing of students enrolled at the school and their protection from foreseeable harm.

1.2 MSA recognises that child safety is not limited to responding to incidents after they occur. MSA is committed to proactively identifying, preventing and managing risks to student safety across its people, programs, physical environments, online environments, governance, complaints processes, recruitment, training and daily school operations.

1.3 MSA implements this Child Risk Management Strategy in accordance with the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld), the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld), the Child Safe Standards, the Universal Principle and other applicable child protection, education, criminal and regulatory obligations to promote the safety and wellbeing of students.

2 Scope

This policy applies to employees, contractors and volunteers in relation to the Queensland operations and it is the responsibility of all employees, contractors and volunteers working for or at a Queensland school to understand and comply with this policy.

3 Purpose

3.1 The purpose of this Strategy is to outline how MSA identifies, prevents and manages risks to student safety and wellbeing in its Queensland operations.

This Strategy supports MSA to:

(a) promote a child safe culture across all Queensland schools;

(b) comply with the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld), the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld), the Child Safe Standards and the Universal Principle;

(c) ensure staff, contractors and volunteers understand their child safety responsibilities;

(d) reduce the risk of harm, abuse, neglect, inappropriate conduct, reportable conduct and breaches of professional boundaries;

(e) ensure child safety risks are identified, assessed, managed, monitored and reviewed; and

(f) ensure concerns are reported and managed in accordance with QLD0022 Child Protection and Child Safe Organisations Policy.

4 References

(a) Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)

(b) Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020 (Qld)

(c) Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)

(d) Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)

(e) Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld)

(f) Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld)

(g) Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)

(h) Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017 (Qld)

(i) Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 (Cth)

(j) Education (Overseas Students) Regulation 2018 (Qld)

(k) Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 (Qld)

(l) Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland)

(m) Education and Care Services National Regulations

(n) Criminal Code Act 1899 (Qld)

(o) Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy Toolkit

(p) Restricted Person Declaration Form

(q) Blue Card Services

(r) Queensland Family and Child Commission Child Safe Standards resources

(s) Queensland Family and Child Commission Universal Principle and cultural safety resources

(t) Queensland Family and Child Commission Reportable Conduct Scheme resources

5 Related Document

(a) QLD0022 Child Protection and Child Safe Organisations Policy

6 Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle

6.1 MSA is committed to implementing the 10 Child Safe Standards under the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld). The Child Safe Standards are embedded through MSA's leadership, governance, recruitment, training, supervision, student participation, complaints processes, child protection procedures, professional conduct expectations, physical and online safety practices, risk management processes and continuous improvement activities.

6.2 In implementing this Strategy, MSA will promote and uphold the right to cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. MSA will take proactive steps to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students feel welcome, safe, valued, included and respected.

6.3 MSA will consider cultural safety when identifying and managing child safety risks, responding to concerns, engaging with families, supporting students, managing complaints, reviewing incidents and improving child safety systems.

7 Code of Conduct

7.1 MSA's Employee Code of Conduct outlines the standards of behaviour expected of staff, contractors and volunteers when interacting with students and the school community.

7.2 The Code of Conduct supports child safety by setting clear expectations for appropriate behaviour, professional boundaries, respectful relationships, supervision, communication, physical contact, online conduct, reporting obligations and the prevention of harm.

7.3 Any behaviour that may constitute inappropriate behaviour, a breach of professional boundaries, harm, abuse, neglect, reportable conduct or conduct that may place a student at risk must be reported and managed in accordance with the Child Protection and Child Safe Organisations Policy.

8 Recruitment, Selection, Training and Management Procedures

8.1 MSA maintains recruitment, selection, screening, induction, training, supervision and performance management processes that support child safety and reduce the risk of harm to students.

8.2 **These processes include:**

(a) recruitment and selection practices that consider child safety and suitability to work with children;

(b) Blue Card and working with children screening requirements;

(c) referee checks and pre-employment checks, where applicable;

(d) induction and annual refresher training in child safety, child protection, mandatory reporting, professional boundaries, the Child Safe Standards, the Universal Principle and reportable conduct obligations;

(e) supervision and management processes that support appropriate conduct and ongoing suitability to work with children; and

(f) action to address conduct, performance or suitability concerns where these may create a risk to student safety or wellbeing.

9 Handling Disclosures, Suspicions of Harm and Child Safety Concerns

9.1 Any child safety concern, disclosure, suspicion of harm, allegation of inappropriate behaviour, professional boundary concern, reportable conduct concern or other concern relating to student safety must be reported and managed in accordance with the Child Protection and Child Safe Organisations Policy.

9.2 This includes concerns relating to:

(a) sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse;

(b) physical or sexual abuse;

(c) significant harm or risk of significant harm;

(d) a child sexual offence committed by an adult;

(e) inappropriate behaviour by a staff member, contractor, volunteer or other worker;

(f) reportable conduct or conduct that may involve reportable conduct;

(g) breaches of professional boundaries; and

(h) any other conduct or situation that may place a student at risk of harm.

9.3 To report any type of child safety concern, harm, suspected harm, sexual abuse, likely sexual abuse, inappropriate behaviour or reportable conduct concern, staff must use the MSA Child Protection Reporting Form and follow the relevant Child Protection Decision Tree to ensure the correct reporting and escalation process is followed.

9.4 Where a concern involves a worker and may constitute reportable conduct, the matter must also be escalated in accordance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme requirements outlined in the Child Protection and Child Safe Organisations Policy.

10 Implementing and Reviewing

10.1 This Strategy in its entirety and its related policies and procedures are evidence of fulfilment of the requirements of Schedule 1 s.2(6)(a) relating to implementation. The introduction to this Child Risk Management Strategy and the "Compliance and Monitoring" section below state Mastery Schools Australia commitment to reviewing the Strategy annually and are evidence of fulfilment of the requirements of the Schedule 1 s.2(6)(a) relating to review.

11 Blue Card Requirements

11.1 All employees, volunteers, and contractors of Mastery Schools Australia (MSA) are required to obtain and maintain a current Blue Card as a condition of their employment or engagement. This includes registration of each Blue Card holder with the Blue Card Organisational Portal, which serves as evidence of compliance with the requirements under Schedule 1, section 2(6)(b) of the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)*.

11.2 It is a mandatory requirement that all staff maintain a valid Blue Card for the entire duration of their employment with MSA. This obligation is clearly stated in each employee's contract of employment.

11.3 Failure to hold or maintain a valid Blue Card may result in immediate suspension from duties, and MSA reserves the right to take appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, in accordance with relevant legislation and contractual obligations.

11.4 **Visitors**

Any visitor who does not hold a valid Blue Card must be accompanied and directly supervised by an MSA staff member at all times while on school premises.

11.5 **New Contractors**

All new contractors, regardless of whether they hold a valid Blue Card, must be accompanied and supervised by an MSA staff member until an established working relationship has been formed and their conduct and understanding of our child safety expectations have been confirmed.

This requirement supports our commitment to maintaining a safe and child-focused learning environment.

12 High Risk Management Procedures

12.1 MSA identifies and manages child safety risks across its Queensland operations through risk assessments, supervision arrangements, staff training, reporting processes, physical environment controls, online safety measures, excursion/camp planning, contractor and visitor management, and review of incidents or concerns.

12.2 Child safety risks may include, but are not limited to:

(a) one-on-one interactions between adults and students;

(b) unsupervised or isolated areas of the school environment;

(c) online communication, digital platforms and school devices;

(d) transport, excursions, camps, activities or events;

(e) contractors, visitors and volunteers on school premises;

(f) students with disability, communication needs, trauma histories or other vulnerabilities;

(g) cultural safety risks for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students;

(h) inappropriate behaviour, grooming behaviours or breaches of professional boundaries;

(i) reportable conduct or conduct that may involve reportable conduct; and

(j) failures to report, escalate, document or respond to child safety concerns.

12.3 Where a child safety risk is identified, MSA will assess the likelihood and consequence of the risk, implement reasonable control measures, document actions taken, monitor the effectiveness of controls and review the risk as required.

12.4 All staff should refer to the Child Protection Decision Tree and the Child Protection and Child Safe Organisations Policy when assessing and reporting risks related to child safety.

13 Communication and Support Strategies

13.1 Mastery Schools Australia's commitment to making this Child Risk Management and related child safety processes to staff, contractors, volunteers, students, parents/guardians and the school community in accessible and appropriate ways.

13.2 MSA will support students to understand their right to be safe, to be heard, and to raise concerns if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable or worried. This may include student-facing posters, nominated Child Safety Officers/Responsible People, student assemblies, classroom reminders, enrolment information, website information and other age-appropriate communication.

13.3 Mastery Schools Australia is committed to training employees in relation to risks to students and will conduct this training regularly via annual formal training events, informal updates at staff meetings and regular discussions between managers and their staff, and this is evidence of fulfilment of the requirements of Schedule 1 s.2(8)(b).

This training includes the correct application of the Child Protection Decision Tree to ensure staff are confident in identifying and responding to child protection concerns.

14 Responsibilities

14.1 Mastery Schools Australia is responsible for developing and implementing this Child Risk Management Policy and related policies and procedures to ensure it fulfils its obligations under the Child Protection Act.

14.2 The Principal is responsible for supporting implementation of this Strategy at the campus level, including ensuring staff understand child safety expectations, reporting pathways, supervision arrangements and risk management requirements.

14.3 All staff, contractors and volunteers are responsible for complying with this Strategy and related child safety policies and procedures, including QLD0022 Child Protection and Child Safe Organisations Policy, the Code of Conduct, reporting requirements and any relevant risk controls.

14.4 The Head of the Reporting Entity or authorised delegate is responsible for managing reportable conduct obligations in accordance with QLD0022 Child Protection and Child Safe Organisations Policy and the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld).

15 Compliance and Monitoring

15.1 Mastery Schools Australia is committed to the annual review of this Policy. Mastery Schools Australia will also record, monitor, and report to the school board, the Senior Executive Team and others as appropriate regarding any breaches of the Strategy.

MSA will monitor implementation of this Strategy through annual review and ongoing compliance activities. Monitoring may include review of:

(a) staff training completion;

(b) Blue Card and screening compliance;

(c) child protection and reportable conduct reporting records;

(d) child safety complaints and concerns;

(e) breaches of this Strategy or related child safety policies;

(f) supervision, visitor and contractor management practices;

(g) student access to child safety reporting pathways;

(h) implementation of the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle;

(i) risk assessments and controls for high-risk activities or environments; and

(j) corrective actions and continuous improvement measures.

15.2 MSA will record, monitor and report to the school board, Senior Executive Team and others as appropriate regarding breaches, trends, risks and improvement actions arising from this Strategy.

16 Helpful Links

(a) Independent Schools Queensland's Child Protection Decision Support Trees

(b) Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety. Child Protection Guide resource

(c) Blue Card Services resources

(d) Queensland Family and Child Commission Child Safe Standards resources

(e) Queensland Family and Child Commission Universal Principle and cultural safety resources

(f) Queensland Family and Child Commission Reportable Conduct Scheme resources

(g) Queensland Family and Child Commission Report a Concern

(h) QLD0022 Child Protection and Child Safe Organisations Policy

The above is evidence of fulfilment of the requirements of Schedule 1 s.2(5).

17 Breach of Policy

17.1 A breach of this Strategy may include failing to identify, manage, report or escalate a child safety risk, failing to comply with Blue Card, screening, supervision, visitor, contractor or volunteer requirements, failing to complete required child safety training, or acting in a way that is inconsistent with MSA's child safety expectations.

17.2 Breaches of this Strategy will be responded to promptly and may result in corrective action, additional training, increased supervision, disciplinary action, restriction of duties or access, termination of employment or engagement, and/or notification to an external authority where required.

17.3 Where a breach raises a child safety concern, it will be managed in accordance with QLD0022 Child Protection Policy.

18 Policy Review

This policy is reviewed periodically as detailed in the Policy Review Schedule. Next review date is June 2027.

19 Communication

This policy is made available to all staff during the onboarding and induction period. It is also readily available on the school's website and internal SharePoint site.